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OLD LOVE STORIES RETOLD

By RICHARD LE GALLIENNE

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TO

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

MY FRIEND

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(*An Excursus on an Ancient Controversy.*)

OLD LOVE STORIES RETOLD

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I

DANTE AND BEATRICE

THE great historic love stories of the world are like the great classics of art and literature. They have become universal symbols f human experience. There are many ways of ving, many shapes of story taken by the fate- ul passion of love in a difficult world, which, hough it may love a lover, seldom shows its love the form of active sympathy while the story in the making. The great love stories fix either ne type of loving after the manner of one or nother temperament, or the type of dramatic xpression imposed upon love by circumstance. hus the story of Tristram and Iseult stands for love irresistibly passionate, stormily sensual, very madness of loving. It represents a quality f, a way of, loving. The significance of the ory of Paolo and Francesca, on the other hand,

is less in the love of the lovers themselves than in the shape of destiny which it took under the pressure of circumstance. Lanciotto is no less important, is even more important, to the story than the lovers themselves, whereas in the case of Tristram and Iseult we never give a second thought to King Mark. Our eyes are held by the spectacle of the superb passion of the lovers as by some awe-inspiring display of the elements. The love of Paolo and Francesca, however, strikes no individual characteristic note—the lovers themselves have no personality—and it is merely one of the elements in the making of a picturesque shape of tragedy, a shape which, before and since, love-history has been constantly taking, and to which in the case of Paolo and Francesca the genius of a great poet has given an accidental immortality.

Dante's own love-story belongs to the first, more significant, class. His love for Beatrice is important because it stands for a way of loving. As many have loved and still go on loving the way of Tristram and Iseult, so many have loved and still go on loving Dante's way, though such a fashion of loving is perhaps less common. Yet, is it so rare, after all, for a man to carry enshrined in his heart from boyhood to manhood, and on to old age, the holy face of some little girl seen for a brief while in the magic dawn of life, lost almost as soon as seen, yet seen in that short moment

with such an ecstasy of sight as to become for him a deathless angel of the imagination, a life-long dream to keep pure the heart?

A poet's love is apt to be a lonely, subjective passion, even when it is returned; for the woman whom the poet loves is often as much his own creation as one of his own poems. Like Pygmalion he loves the work of his own dreams. But never was any poet's love—not even that of John Keats for Fanny Brawne—so entirely one-sided as that of Dante for Beatrice. Save as the object of Dante's worship, Beatrice has no share in the story at all. She seems to have had no more care for Dante's love, and indeed to have been hardly more aware of its existence, than a new star has care for, or is aware of, its discoverer. "The beloved," says Hafiz, "is in no need of our imperfect love." Dante was free to worship her afar off if he pleased. It was not her fault if she preferred the less portentous attentions of the society young fellows of her set. A lover like Dante might well bewilder, and even alarm, a young miss, whose thoughts, for all her mystical beauty, ran—innocently and properly enough—on her sweetmeats and her next dance. But, if that saying of Hafiz be true, it is open to the retort that a lover like Dante can dispense with a return of his affection. All he asks is to dream his dream. To have his love returned might be disastrous to his dream.

It is no mere flippancy to suppose that had Dante had fuller opportunities of knowing the real earth-born Beatrice, the divine Beatrice would have been lost to him and to us. Fortunately, their intercourse seems to have been of the slightest. For Beatrice, Dante was hardly more than an acquaintance, who, after the fashion of his day, paid court to her in sonnet and ballata—forms of devotion at that time hardly so serious as a serenade. For it was the period of the courts and colleges of love, when a poet might write in the name of a strictly poetical "mistress," with hardly more thought of scandalous realities behind his song than if to-day a poet should dedicate his new volume, by permission, to some noble lady. Dante's uniquely beautiful record of his love-story, the "Vita Nuova," is cast in just that formal fanciful mould of literary and mystical love-making which was then fashionable, and were it not that the form of it is quite powerless to suppress the intense sincerity and youthful freshness of an evidently real feeling, it might have passed for a brilliant piece of troubadour make-believe. As it is, however, the very artificiality of the form is turned to account, and seems rather to accentuate than detract from the impression of youthful ecstasy. Young love is ever curious to invent some form of exquisite ritual for the expression of its worship. Common words are not rare enough for the fastidious young

priest who thus bows his head in the awful sanctuary of his first love. So the very artifice with which in the "Vita Nuova" we see Dante delighting to fret little golden "chambers of imagery" for the honey, and delicate lachrimatories for the sorrow, of his love, is in itself an added touch of reality.

Very youthful and lover-like is the vein of mystical superstition which runs through the confession, as, for example, the insistence on the number nine in the opening sentences and throughout. Not without hidden significance, it seemed to the young poet, was it that he should have met Beatrice when she was almost beginning her ninth year and he almost ending his. Here alone was an evidence that they were born for each other. Who can forget his hushed account of his first meeting with that "youngest of the angels"?

"Nine times already since my birth had the heaven of light returned to the selfsame point almost, as concerns its own revolution, when first the glorious Lady of my mind was made manifest to my eyes, even she who was called Beatrice by many who knew not wherefore. She had already been in this life for so long as that, within her time, the starry heaven had moved towards the eastern quarter one of the twelve parts of a degree; so that she appeared to me at the beginning of her ninth year almost, and I saw her almost at the end of my ninth year. Her dress, on that

day, was of a most noble colour, a subdued and goodly crimson, girdled and adorned in such sort as best suited with her very tender age. At that moment, I say most truly that the spirit of life, which hath its dwelling in the secretest chamber of the heart, began to tremble so violently that the least pulses of my body shook therewith; and in trembling it said these words: Ecce deus fortior me, qui veniens dominabitur mihi [Here is a deity stronger than I; who, coming, shall rule over me]."

It is probable that this historic meeting thus mystically described had come of Dante's father one day taking the boy with him to a festa—or, as we should say, a party—given by his neighbour Folco de Portinari. Dante's father was, it would appear, a well-to-do lawyer, with old blood in his veins, but still of the burgher class; whereas Portinari was probably richer and in a higher social position.

Another nine years was to pass before Dante and Beatrice were even to speak to each other—for it does not appear that they had spoken at that first meeting—and by that time she had been given in marriage to a banker of Florence, one Simon de Bardi. Meanwhile, Dante may have caught glimpses of her in church or in the street, but beyond such slight sustenance his love had had nothing to feed on all those years. Once again Dante dwells on the recurrence of

he significant number nine in his history. "After he lapse," says he, "of so many days that nine ears exactly were completed since the above-ritten appearance of this most gracious being, n the last of those days it happened that the ame wonderful lady appeared to me dressed all a pure white, between two gentle ladies elder han she. And passing through a street, she urned her eyes thither where I stood sorely bashed; and by her unspeakable courtesy, which s now guerdoned in the Great Cycle, she saluted ne with so virtuous a bearing that I seemed then nd there to behold the very limits of blessedness. The hour of her most sweet salutation was exactly the ninth of that day; and, because it was he first time that any words from her reached mine ears, I came into such sweetness that I parted thence as one intoxicated."

What were the words, one wonders, that sent he poet walking on air through the streets of Florence, and shut him up in the loneliness of is own room to dream of her, and to write mystical onnets for the interpretation of his fellow poets, s was the manner of that day? They can hardly ave been more than a "Good morning, Messer Alighieri. We have missed your face in Florence or ever so long." But then the voice and the mile that went with the ordinary words! It lmost seems as though they must have conveyed rarer message to the poet's heart. Or did the

poet merely misinterpret according to his hopes an act of conventional graciousness ?

It is to be feared that he did. But, be that as it may, that " most sweet salutation " sufficed so to fan the flame of love in the poet's heart that he grew thin and pale from very lovesickness, so that his friends began to wonder at him and make guesses at the lady. Dante, perceiving this, and seeing that he must protect Beatrice from any breath of gossip, conceived the plan of making another lady the screen for his love. It chanced that, one day Dante being in the same church with Beatrice, a lady sat in a direct line between Beatrice and himself, and, as she looked round at him several times, and his eyes, in reality burning upon Beatrice, might well seem to be answering hers, the gossips concluded that she it was who had brought him to such a pass of love. Becoming aware of the mistake, Dante saw in it the needed means of shielding Beatrice, and he diligently set about confirming the gossips in their error by writing poems which seemed to point to the other lady, but were in reality inspired by Beatrice. At this time, he tells us, he made a list in the form of a " sirvente " of the names of the sixty most beautiful women in Florence, and he bids us take note of a strange thing : " that having written the list, I found my lady's name would not stand otherwise than ninth in order among the names of these ladies ! "

In course of time, travel took his beautiful "screen" from Florence, and it became necessary for him to find a substitute. This he was presently enabled to do, and soon he became so identified with his fictitious lady, and rumour began to speak such evil of them both, that his own true lady, "the destroyer of all evil and the queen of all good," meeting him one day, denied him her salutation. Thereupon, in bitter grief, Dante took counsel of Love, and composed a veiled song which should reveal the truth to Beatrice and yet hide it. But how she received it, or whether or not she took him back into her favour, is not made clear. It hardly seems as though she had done so, from the next occasion on which we see them in each other's company. This was one of great sorrow and bitterness, and is described so vividly by Dante himself that I will transcribe his own words:

"After this battling with many thoughts, it chanced on a day that my most gracious lady was with a gathering of ladies in a certain place; to the which I was conducted by a friend of mine. . . . And they were assembled around a gentlewoman who was given in marriage that day; the custom of the city being that these should bear her company when she sat down for the first time at table in the house of her husband. Therefore I, as was my friend's pleasure, resolved to stay with him and do honour to those ladies.

"But as soon as I had thus resolved, I began to feel a faintness and a throbbing at my left side, which soon took possession of my whole body. Whereupon I remember that I covertly leaned my back unto a painting that ran round the walls of that house; and being fearful lest my trembling should be discerned of them, I lifted mine eyes to look upon those ladies, and then first perceived among them the excellent Beatrice. And when I perceived her, all my senses were overpowered by the great lordship that Love obtained, finding himself so near unto that most gracious being, until nothing but the spirits of sight remained to me. . . . By this, many of her friends, having discerned my confusion, began to wonder; and, together with herself, kept whispering of me and mocking me. Whereupon my friend, who knew not what to conceive, took me by the hands, and drawing me forth from among them, required to know what ailed me. Then, having first held me at quiet for a space until my perceptions were come back to me, I made answer to my friend: 'Of a surety I have now set my feet on that point of life beyond the which he must not pass who would return.'"

From that moment Dante's passion was an open secret among his acquaintance, and his lovelorn looks were matter of jest among them. We read of no more meetings with Beatrice, except a chance encounter in the street as she

alked with a beautiful friend named Joan. Whether she gave or withheld her salutation on his occasion, Dante does not tell us. Meanhile, her father had died, and Dante had written er a poem of sympathy; also he himself had een so sick that thoughts of death had come close o him, and with them a prophetic vision of the eath of Beatrice, all too soon to be fulfilled. ante tells how he was busied with a long, careully conceived poem in celebration of her beauty nd her virtue, and had composed but one stanza, when the Lord God of justice called my most racious lady unto Himself, that she might be lorious under the banner of that blessed Queen lary whose name had always a deep reverence the words of holy Beatrice." Heaven had eed of her. Earth was no fit place for so fair a pirit.

A love such as Dante's, dream-born and dream-d, and never at any time nourished on the realities f earthly loving, would necessarily be intensified the death of the beloved. That mysterious onsecration which death always brings with it pecially transfigures the memories of the young nd the beautiful. She had come nearer to him ther than gone farther away. So, at least, he ould feign in his imagination, where he was now ee to enthrone her for ever as the bride of his ul—without the thought of any Simon de Bardi break in upon his dream. In life she could

never be his, but in her death they were no longer divided.

Yet before this dream could grow into an assured reality for him, bringing firmness and peace to his heart, there were many months of bitter human grief to pass through. Beatrice was indeed a saint in heaven, but ah! she no longer walked the streets of Florence. Like any other bereaved lover, he sought many anodynes for his grief—some unworthy ones, for which his conscience reproached him at the time and long years after. With the instinct of the poet, he first sought the consolation of beautiful words. As some men fly to wine in sorrow, the poet flies to verse. "When my eyes," he says, "had wept for some while, until they were so weary with weeping that I could no longer through them give ease to my sorrow, I bethought me that a few mournful words might stand me instead of tears. And therefore I proposed to make a poem, that weeping I might speak therein of her for whom so much sorrow had destroyed my spirit; and I then began 'The eyes that weep.'"

"Beatrice is gone up into high Heaven,
The kingdom where the angels are at peace;
And lives with them: and to her friends is dead.

"Not by the frost of winter was she driven
Away, like others; nor by summer-heats;
But through a perfect gentleness, instead.
For from the lamp of her meek lowlihead

Such an exceeding glory went up hence
That it woke wonder in the Eternal sire,
Until a sweet desire
Entered Him for that lovely excellence,
So that He bade her to Himself aspire;
Counting this weary and most evil place
Unworthy of a thing so full of grace.

"Wonderfully out of the beautiful form
Soared her clear spirit, waxing glad the while;
And is in its first home, there where it is.
Who speaks thereof, and feels not the tears warm
Upon his face, must have become so vile
As to be dead to all sweet sympathies. . . ."

Later, he tells us how he found consolation in
e sympathy of a certain "young and very
eautiful lady," consolation so tender and kind
at he confesses, in self-reproach, that his "eyes
egan to be gladdened overmuch by her com-
ny, through which thing many times I had
uch unrest, and rebuked myself as a base
rson."

That he also experimented with the commoner
odynes of grief seems certain from this stern
nnet addressed to him by his first of friends,
uido Cavalcanti:

"I come to thee by daytime constantly,
But in thy thoughts too much of baseness find:
Greatly it grieves me for thy gentle mind,
And for thy many virtues gone from thee.
It was thy wont to shun much company,
Unto all sorry concourse ill inclin'd:
And still thy speech of me, heartfelt and kind,
Had made me treasure up thy poetry.

But now I dare not, for thine abject life,
Make manifest that I approve thy rimes ;
Nor come I in such sort that thou mayst know.
Ah ! prythee read this sonnet many times :
So shall that evil one who bred this strife
Be thrust from thy dishonoured soul and go."

That Guido Cavalcanti did not write thu without cause, is proved by Beatrice's solem reproach of him in the "Purgatorio." Indeed she implies that his way of life at this time wa the cause of his vision of the Inferno :

"So low he fell, that all appliances
For his salvation were already short,
Save showing him the people of perdition."

In the same poem he admits :

"The things that present were
With their false pleasure turned aside my steps,
Soon as your countenance concealed itself."

But, through all, the dream of his love wa growing more bright and sure ; and soon it wa to ascend above all earthly fumes, and shine dow on him, the fixed guiding star of a life that, i its turbulent vicissitudes and bitter sorrows, wa more than most, to need the sustaining light c such a spiritual ideal.

Dante was to marry, and his wife Gemm was to bear him seven children—a wife who can not have been unsympathetic to his dream, fc she allowed him to name their daughter Beatrice

orence was to become the second passion of
s life; he was to descend into hell, and eat the
tter bread of exile: but through all, growing
ighter with the years, shone down upon his
ugh and devious pathway the white girl-star
Beatrice. His first love was his last. Commen-
tors have endeavoured to explain her away as a
etaphysical symbol, and Dante himself came to
ink of Beatrice as an impersonation of Divine
isdom. In the close of his long and strenuous
e, it might well seem to him that her having
ed on earth at all was a dream of his boyhood,
far away that dreaming boyhood of the "Vita
uova" must have seemed; but, for all that,
e know that it was just a young girl's face that
d this strong stern man of iron and tears safely
rough his pilgrimage of the world.

> "All ye that pass along Love's trodden way
> Pause ye awhile,"

d meditate upon this marvel.

II

AUCASSIN AND NICOLETE *

THOUGH the song-story—" cante-fable "—" C'est d'Aucassin et de Nicolete," has long had an antiquarian interest for scholars, it is only during the last twenty years or so that it has taken its place in the living literature of the world, and given two of the most fragrant names to the mythology of lovers. Monsieur Bida in France, and Mr. Andrew Lang and Mr. F. W. Bourdillon in England, are to be thanked for rescuing this precious pearl from the dust-heaps of philological learning. In England Mr. Bourdillon was first with a very graceful and scholarly translation. Walter Pater in his famous essays on "The Renaissance" early directed to it the attention of amateurs of such literary delicacies; but practically Mr. Lang is its sponsor in English, by virtue of a translation which for freshness and grace and tender beauty may well take the place

* Though Aucassin and Nicolete are not historically authenticated lovers, being the children of a troubadour's imagination, I have ventured to include their story, because they have long since been real to us—through romance.

the original with those of us for whom Old nch has its difficulties. Nine years before, . Edmund Clarence Stedman had introduced lovers to American readers in "A Masque of ts." There in a single lyric Mr. Stedman so skilfully concentrated the romance of the story that I venture to quote from it, par-larly as Mr. Stedman has done readers of poetry the mysterious unkindness of omitting rom his collected poems :

"Within the garden of Biaucaire
He met her by a secret stair,—
The night was centuries ago.
Said Aucassin, 'My love, my pet,
These old confessors vex me so!
They threaten all the pains of hell
Unless I give you up, ma belle,'—
Said Aucassin to Nicolette.

"'Now, who should there in heaven be
To fill your place, ma très-douce mie?
To reach that spot I little care!
There all the droning priests are met;—
All the old cripples, too, are there
That unto shrines and altars cling,
To filch the Peter-pence we bring';—
Said Aucassin to Nicolette.

. . . . . .

"'To purgatory I would go
With pleasant comrades whom we know,
Fair scholars, minstrels, lusty knights
Whose deeds the land will not forget,
The captains of a hundred fights,
The men of valour and degree:
We'll join that gallant company,'—
Said Aucassin to Nicolette.

. . . . . .

"'Sweet players on the cithern strings
And they who roam the world like kings
Are gathered there, so blithe and free!
Pardie! I'd join them now, my pet,
If you went also, ma douce mie!
The joys of heaven I'd forego
To have you with me there below,'—
Said Aucassin to Nicolette."

Here the three notes of the old song story are admirably struck: the force and freshness of young passion, the troubadourish sweetness of literary manner, the rebellious humanity. Young love has ever been impatient of the middle-aged wisdom of the world, and fiercely resisted the pious or practical restraints to its happiness; but perhaps the rebelliousness of young heart has never been so audaciously expressed as in "Aucassin and Nicolete." The absurdity of parents who, after all these generations of experience, still confidently oppose themselves to that omnipotent passion which Holy Writ itself tells us many waters cannot quench; the absurdity of thin-blooded, chilly old maids of both sexes who would have us believe that this warm-hearted ecstasy is an evil thing, and that prayer and fasting are better worth doing—not in the most "pagan" literature of our own time have these twin absurdities been assailed with more outspoken contempt than in this naïve old romance of the thirteenth century. The Count Bougars de Valence is at war with Count Garin de Biaucaire

e town of Biaucaire is closely besieged and Count is in despair, for he is an old man, l his son Aucassin, who should take his place, so overtaken with a hopeless passion that he in a lovesick dream, refusing to put on his nour or to take any part in the defence of the vn. His father reproaches him, and how abso-ely of our own day rings his half-bored, half-patient answer. "'Father,' said Aucassin, 'I rvel that you will be speaking. Never may d give me aught of my desire if I be made ght, or mount my horse, or face stour and tle wherein knights smite and are smitten in, unless thou give me Nicolete, my true e, that I love so well. . . .'"

Father—*can't* you understand? How strange people are! Don't you see how it is?

'Father, I marvel that you will be speaking!" is the eternal exclamation, the universal shrug, youth confronted by "these tedious old fools!" Now Nicolete is no proper match for Aucassin, great Count's son—though, naturally, in Au-sin's opinion, "if she were Empress of Con-ntinople or of Germany, or Queen of France England, it were little enough for her"—ause she is "the slave girl" of the Count's n Captain-at-arms, who had bought her of Saracens, reared, christened, and adopted her his "daughter-in-God." Actually she is the ghter of the King of Carthage, though no

one in Biaucaire, not even herself, knows of her high birth. The reader, of course, would naturally guess as much, for no polite jongleur of the Middle Ages, addressing, as he did, an audience of the highest rank, would admit into his stories any but heroes and heroines with the finest connections.

Father and son by turns have an interview with the Captain. The Captain promises the Count to send Nicolete into a far country, and the story goes in Biaucaire that she is lost, or made away with by the order of the Count. The Captain, however, having an affection for his adopted daughter, and being a rich man, secretes her high up in "a rich palace with a garden in face of it." To him comes Aucassin asking for news of his lady. The Captain, with whose dilemma it is possible for anyone not in his first youth to sympathize, lectures Aucassin not unkindly after the prescribed formulas. It is impossible for Aucassin to marry Nicolete, and, were he less honest, hell would be his portion and Paradise closed against him for ever. It is in answer to this admirable common sense that Aucassin flashes out his famous defiance. "Paradise!" he laughs—"in Paradise what have I to win? Therein I seek not to enter but only to have Nicolete, my sweet lady that I love so well. For into Paradise go none but such folk as I shall tell thee now: Thither go these same old priests, and halt old men and maimed who all day and night cower continually before

e altars and in the crypts ; and such folk as wear
l amices and old clouted frocks, and naked folk
d shoeless, and covered with sores, perishing
hunger and thirst, and of cold, and of little
se. These be they that go into Paradise, with
em have I naught to make. But into hell would
fain go ; for into hell fare the goodly clerks,
d goodly knights that fall in tourneys and great
rs, and stout men-at-arms, and all men noble.
ith these would I liefly go. And thither pass
e sweet ladies and courteous that have two
ers, or three, and their lords also thereto.
ither go the gold, and the silver, and cloth
vair, and cloth of gris, and harpers, and makers,
d the princes of this world. With these I would
dly go, let me but have with me Nicolete,
sweetest lady."

Aucassin's defiance of priests as well as parents
something more significant than the impulsive
terance of wilful youth. It is at once, as Pater
s pointed out, illustrative of that humanistic
volt against the ideals of Christian asceticism
ich even in the Middle Ages was already be-
ning—a revolt openly acknowledged in the
called Renaissance—and a revolt growingly char-
eristic of our own time. The gospel of the
of Life is no mere heresy to-day. Rather
may be said to be the prevailing faith. Aucassin's
rited speech is no longer a lonely protest. It
s become a creed.

Finding Aucassin unshaken in his determinatio
the Count his father bribes him with a promi
that, if he will take the field, he shall be permitt
to see Nicolete—" even so long," Aucassin stip
lates, " that I may have of her two words or thre
and one kiss." The compact made, Aucass
does so mightily " with his hands " against t
enemy that he raises the siege and takes prison
the Count Bougars de Valence. But the fath
refuses the agreed reward—and here, after t
charming manner of the old story-teller himself, w
may leave prose awhile and continue the story
verse—the correct formula is " Here one singeth

" When the Count Garin doth know
That his child would ne'er forego
Love of her that loved him so,
Nicolete, the bright of brow,
In a dungeon deep below
Childe Aucassin did he throw.
Even there the Childe must dwell
In a dun-walled marble cell.
There he waileth in his woe,
Crying thus as ye shall know:
'Nicolete, thou lily white,
My sweet lady, bright of brow,
Sweeter than the grape art thou,
Sweeter than sack posset good
In a cup of maple wood . . .

" 'My sweet lady, lily white,
Sweet thy footfall, sweet thine eyes,
And the mirth of thy replies.
Sweet thy laughter, sweet thy face,
Sweet thy lips and sweet thy brow,
And the touch of thy embrace.
Who but doth in thee delight?

I for love of thee am bound
In this dungeon underground,
All for loving thee must lie
Here where loud on thee I cry,
Here for loving thee must die,
For thee, my love.' "

Now Nicolete is no less whole-hearted and inomitable in her love than Aucassin. She is ke a prophecy of Rosalind in her adventurous, ıll-blooded girlhood. When her master has ocked her up in the tower, she loses no time in aking a vigorous escape by that ladder of knotted edclothes without which romance could hardly ave gone on existing. Who that has read it an forget the picture of her as she slips down ıto the moonlit garden, and kilts up her kirtle because of the dew that she saw lying deep on ıe grass " ?—

" Her locks were yellow and curled, her eyes lue and smiling, her face featly fashioned, the ose high and fairly set, the lips more red than herry or rose in time of summer, her teeth white nd small; her breasts so firm that they bore p the folds of her bodice as they had been two pples; so slim she was in the waist that your wo hands might have clipped her, and the daisy owers that brake beneath her as she went tip-toe, nd that bent above her instep, seemed black against er feet, so white was the maiden."

As Nicolete steals in the moonlight to the uinous tower where her lover lies, she hears

him "wailing within, and making dole and lament for the sweet lady he loves so well." The lovers snatch a perilous talk, while the town's guards pass down the street with drawn swords seeking Nicolete, but not remarking her crouched in the shadow of the tower. How Nicolete makes good her escape into the wildwood and builds a bower of woven boughs with her own hands, and how Aucassin finds her there, and the joy they have and their wandering together in strange lands, their losing each other once more, and their final happy finding of each other again—"by God's will who loveth lovers"—is not all this written in the Book of Love?—

> "Sweet the song, the story sweet.
> There is no man hearkens it,
> No man living 'neath the sun
> So outwearied, so foredone,
> Sick and woful, worn and sad,
> But is healèd, but is glad.
> 'Tis so sweet."

The story is simple enough, of a pattern old and familiar as love itself, but the telling of it is a rare achievement of artistry, that artistry which is so accomplished as to be able to imitate simplicity; for, roughly connected as are certain parts of the story, "Aucassin and Nicolete" in the main is evidently the work of one who was a true poet and an exquisite literary craftsman. The curious, almost unique, form of it is one of its most characteristic charms; for it is written

ternately in prose and verse. The verse some-
mes repeats in a condensed form what has
ready been related in the prose, sometimes
aborates upon it, and sometimes carries on the
ory independently. The formula with which
e prose is introduced is: "So say they, speak
ey, tell they the Tale," and the formula for
troducing the verse, as already noted, is:
Here one singeth." These formulas, and the
ct that the music for some of the songs has come
own to us on the precious unique manuscript
eserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale, lead
itics to think that the romance was probably
esented by a company of jongleurs, with music,
d possibly with some dramatic action. The
thor is unknown, and the only reference to him
his own in the opening song:

> "Who would list to the good lay,
> Gladness of the captive gray?"

M. Gaston Paris suggests that the "viel caitif"
ed and wrote in the time of Louis VII. (1130),
d Mr. Lang draws a pretty picture of the
lderly, nameless minstrel strolling with his
ol and his singing-boys . . . from castle to
stle in 'the happy poplar land.'" Beaucaire
better known nowadays for its ancient fair
an for its lovers. According to tradition, that
r has been held annually for something like a
ousand years—and our lovers have been dead

almost as long. Still, thanks to the young hear of that unknown old troubadour, their love i as fresh as a may-bush in his songs, the dew i still on the moonlit daisies where Nicolete's whit feet have just passed, and her bower in the wild wood is as green as the day she wove it out o boughs and flowers. As another old poet has sung "the world might find the spring by followin her"—so exquisitely vernal is the spirit tha breathes from this old song story. To read in i is to take the advice given to Aucassin by a certai knight. "Aucassin," said the knight, "of tha sickness of thine have I been sick, and good counse will I give thee . . . mount thy horse, and go tak thy pastime in yonder forest, there wilt tho see the good flowers and grass, and hear the swee birds sing. Perchance thou shalt hear some word whereby thou shalt be the better."

The reader will do well to take the knight advice, and follow into the woodland "the fa white feet of Nicolete."

III

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY AND LADY PENELOPE DEVEREUX

IT is strange that a love story connected with so illustrious a name as that of Sir Philip Sidney should, practically, be forgotten. Sidney ves in the popular imagination by the famous necdote of the cup of cold water, and as the ype of all that was gallant and gentle in the lizabethan gentleman. But it is doubtful hether, in spite of Charles Lamb's attempt to efresh the memory of time, anyone, outside cholars and enthusiasts for the old-fashioned ardens of English poetry, ever reads either his nce famous romance of "Arcadia" or his much nore important poems. Sonnet anthologies usually ontain the sonnet, "With how sad steps, O Moon, nou climb'st the sky," but the sequence of which is but one constituent, that fascinating, heart-elt sequence of sonnets and songs which tells of ne loves of "Astrophel and Stella," is, I imagine, ery seldom taken from its dusty shelf. Yet, hat an ever-fragrant garden it is, and how vividly

its old passionate story still tells itself in the old, ever young, words.

Doubtless it suffers with the general reader from its old spelling and its euphuistic conceits, and its general air of archaism. Nothing frightens your general reader like long " s's " and unnecessary " e's." It may be said that when a poet is great enough, he is sure to be printed without these marks of the antiquity from which he comes. Shakespeare's sonnets, for example, are in their original spelling no less ruffed and doubleted than Sidney's, but we know them in the spelling of our own time. Chaucer, however, is a great poet whom we have to take as he himself spelled or not at all. And so with Sidney—though, of course, his archaism is nothing like so difficult. Actually, of course, to the true lover of old poetry there is a positive charm in the quaint look of the old spelling, and a real gain in atmosphere. There is, too, something naïve and appealing about it, similar to the charm that sometimes belongs to the accent of a foreigner talking English. It is the fascinating broken accent of antiquity. Take this sonnet with which the love-journal of " Astrophel and Stella " opens :

" Loving in truth, and faine in verse my love to show,
That she, deare She, might take some pleasure of my paine,—
Pleasure might cause her reade, reading might make her know,
Knowledge might pitie winne, and pitie grace obtaine,—
I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe ;
Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertaine,

)ft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow
Some fresh and fruitfull showers upon my sunne-burn'd braine.
But words came halting forth, wanting Invention's stay;
Invention, Nature's child, fled step-dame Studie's blowes;
And others' feete still seem'd but strangers in my way.
Thus, great with childe to speak, and helplesse in my throwes,
Biting my trewand pen, beating myselfe for spite;
Foole, said my Muse to me, looke in thy heart, and write."

Thus Sidney looked into his heart and wrote, sincerely and simply that we, all these years ter, can, if we care, looking into his book, look to his heart also. Many of the sonnets are affected ter the manner of the time, stuck full of "vain natorious" fancies, as Milton said, but no more than Shakespeare's own, and very soon, underath all the literary laces and fripperies, we are are of a brave heart beating, and almost breaking, th a love "that never found its earthly close."

Certain editors and biographers have protested ainst the natural interpretation of Sidney's nnets, as interested editors and biographers ll, but the editor of Sidney whose opinion tters most, Mr. A. W. Pollard, is in favour the natural reading. Most editors seem to nsider it a point of honour to whitewash their roes out of all their common humanity and to luce them as much as possible to models of stract power and perfection. In Sidney's case, ne of us may find a character of such legendary cellence gain rather than lose by a story which eals him possessed too of like human passion

and frailty with ourselves. Sidney's grace and gentleness, as often happens with people of gentle manners and delicate natures, have somewhat unfairly sweetened and sanctified his memory, so that the world has forgotten that he was a brave soldier as well as a graceful courtier; a man of stern moral courage—as witness his outspoken criticism of Queen Elizabeth's proposed Spanish match; an impulsive and intrepid antagonist—as witness his unaccepted challenge to the brutal and bullying Earl of Oxford; and a fiery and fearless lover whose passion was far from expending itself in sonnets.

It appears probable that Astrophel first set eyes upon his Stella in the summer of 1575, at Chartley Castle, the seat of the Earl of Essex, on the occasion of Queen Elizabeth's visit there. Sidney, though as yet not twenty-one, was already a gallant and accomplished figure at Court, and *persona grata* with the Queen, in whose train he arrived at Chartley, fresh from Kenilworth and those historic festivities of his magnificent uncle, the Earl of Leicester. The little Lady Penelope Devereux, eldest daughter of his host and hostess, was only twelve, but already of a strange and striking beauty. Being, too, as her subsequent career proved, of a romantic temperament, she could hardly fail to have been interested in the brilliant young courtier, though indeed, so far as we can judge, neither Sidney nor she appears to have

len in love at first sight. Sidney definitely speaks himself on this point in his second sonnet:

"Not at the first sight, nor with a dribbèd shot,
Love gave the wound, which, while I breathe, will bleed;
But knowne worth did in mine of time proceed,
Till by degrees it had full conquest got.
I saw, and liked; I liked, but lovèd not;
I loved, but straight did not what Love decreed:
At length, to Love's decrees I, forc'd, agreed,
Yet with repining at so partiall lot."

And there seems good reason to think that nelope's love was of even still slower growth. evertheless, Sidney appears to have lost no ne in following up the acquaintance thus begun Chartley, and very soon we find him a frequent itor at Durham House and high in the affections Penelope's father, who, it is said, was wont to l him his "son by adoption" and who, on his ath-bed, in the September of 1576—when Sidney s hastening toward him, to arrive, alas! too e—left him this touching message: "Oh, that od gentleman, have me commended unto him. d tell him I sent him nothing, but I wish him ll—so well, that if God do move their hearts, wish that he might match with my daughter. call him son—he is so wise, virtuous, and godly. he go on in the course he hath begun, he will as famous and worthy a gentleman as ever gland bred."

It appears soon to have been common talk at urt that the dying Earl's wish was to take, or

had already taken, the form of a definite engagement. So matters stood in the autumn of 1576, when the darkness of time suddenly falls upon the story, and the historian is left to conjecture; till once more, in 1581, the startling fact emerges that Penelope has been married, not to Sidney, but to Lord Rich, a man of very different type, coarse and cruel, and, it would appear, by no means Penelope's own choice. There exists a letter from the Earl of Devonshire to James I. in which the Earl states that, Penelope "being in the power of her friends, she was by them married against her will unto one against whom she did protest at the very solemnity and ever after." The reason of this enforced marriage is very plausibly suggested by Mr. Pollard, who has pieced together the whole story with skill. Two years after her husband's death, the Dowager Countess of Essex (that is, Penelope's mother) was married to Philip's uncle, the Earl of Leicester. Up to that time Philip had been his uncle's heir, and, therefore, one of the best matches in England, but with that marriage and the subsequent arrival of a cousin, Philip, as Mr. Pollard points out, became a poor, even a very poor, gentleman. Penelope's mother and friends might, therefore, be anxious to find her a wealthier husband. So Mr. Pollard, with great probability, accounts for Lord Rich's place in the story. Surely, if this conjecture be correct, it must have seemed the bitterest of ironies for the two lovers that the

arriage of Stella's mother to her lover's uncle ould thus destroy the happiness of their lives. Whether or not Philip and Penelope had been rmally engaged during this interval, it is certain at he and she saw much of each other at the uses of mutual relatives and friends, and that ey were still seeing each other in the summer d the late autumn of 1580. Though the love till then seems to have been mainly, if not tirely, on Sidney's side, and Penelope's attitude her that of a coquette, attracted but still un- on, there seems no reason for thinking that ord Rich was as yet a factor in her future; and, deed, her forced marriage with him may have me to her with no less shock of cruel surprise an it appears to have come with to Sidney mself. Judging by one of Sidney's songs, his st anger seems to have been directed against nelope herself, and one may add that a man of dney's calibre would hardly inveigh against a oman in the fashion of this stanza without her ving given him the excuse of at least great pes of her love :

"Ring out your belles, let mourning shewes be spread;
For Love is dead:
All Love is dead, infected
With plague of deep disdaine:
Worth, as nought worth, rejected,
And Faith faire scorne doth gaine.
From so ungratefull fancie,
From such a femall franzie,
From them that use men thus,
Good Lord, deliver us!"

Before writing the last stanza of the poem, however, which reads like a postscript, Sidney appears to have realized the truth: that Stella was not unfaithful to him, but that she, rather than he, was the victim:

> "Alas, I lie: rage hath this errour bred;
> Love is not dead;
> Love is not dead, but sleepeth
> In her unmatchèd mind,
> Where she his counsell keepeth,
> Till due desert she find.
> Therefore from so vile fancie,
> To call such wit a franzie,
> Who Love can temper thus,
> Good Lord, deliver us!"

And, with the realization that she was in no true sense the wife of Lord Rich, he seems to have determined that such a so-called marriage should be no bar to his true love, but that Penelope Devereux virtually, and even virtuously, remained Penelope Devereux still; a woman still honourably to be wooed and rightfully to be won. So, at least, it seems natural to interpret this stanza which concludes a poem entitled "The Smokes of Melancholy":

> "For me, alas, I am full resolv'd
> Those bands, alas, shall not be dissolv'd;
> Nor breake my word, though reward come late;
> Nor faile my faith in my failing fate;
> Nor change in change, though change change my state:
> But alwayes one myselfe with eagle eyde Trueth, to flie
> Up to the sunne, although the sunne my wings do frie;
> For if those flames burne my desire,
> Yet shall I die in Phœnix' fire."

That Sidney followed up this resolve with a ermination which had perhaps never before rked his wooing is proved by something like ɔ-thirds of the entire "Astrophel and Stella." these sonnets and songs the story of his heart ı be read, as it were, from day to day. And, if can judge by two outspoken sonnets punning the hated name of Rich, he appears to have de no secret of his hatred for the man who d bought the woman he loved against her will. ere is one of them :

"Towárd Aurora's Court a nymph doth dwell,
Rich in all beauties which man's eye can see;
Beauties so farre from reach of words, that we
Abase her praise saying she doth excell;
Rich in the treasure of deserv'd renowne,
Rich in the riches of a royall hart,
Rich in those gifts which give th' eternall crowne;
Who, though most rich in these and everie part
Which make the patents of true worldly blisse,
Hath no misfortune but that Rich she is."

If no true blame attaches to Sidney for his usal to recognize such a marriage, surely it s not wrong of Penelope (who, it must be re-mbered, was so lately a woman—she was only hteen at her marriage) to realize for the first ıe by the cruel contrast of her marriage what had lost by her possible previous coquetry h Sidney, and to give to his wooing a value l a hearing such as, in her unawakened, irre-nsible girlhood, she had never thought or cared

to give it before. A girl married, as she was married, brutally against her will, could hardly be blamed for even more serious forms of rebellion than giving ear to a noble lover whom too late she had learned to love. We can, therefore, do no injustice to Penelope in deducing from Sidney's sonnets that it was not till after she became Lady Rich that her love for Sidney really awoke. We may do this with the less fear of injustice for two good reasons. Sidney was not the man to pursue Stella with a love which she had manifestly and definitely shown him she did not desire; nor therefore, was he the man to write falsely about the incidents of his wooing, even in the licensed form of the sonnet. Again, everything he tells us is eminently in Stella's favour. He reveals indeed that, after patient importunity, he had persuaded her to acknowledge her love, but he reveals, too, with what reluctance the confession had been drawn from her, how innocent were the tokens she had given of her love, and how she had striven with his more lawless passion—striven, as the lofty feeling and resolution of the concluding sonnets prove, with a gentle firmness far from in vain.

To illustrate the story by adequate quotation would take up too much space, and indeed many of the sonnets most significant historically are of least worth poetically, and may well be left for the reader to peruse for himself. Here, how

r, is one that can hardly be omitted, as it proves nce Stella's love for Sidney and the fine nature that love :

"Late tyr'd with wo, even ready for to pine
With rage of love, I cald my Love unkind ;
She in whose eyes love, though unfelt, doth shine,
Sweet said, that I true love in her should find.
I joyed ; but straight thus watred was my wine :
That love she did, but loved a love not blind,
Which would not let me, whom she loved, decline
From nobler course, fit for my birth and mind :
And therefore, by her love's authority,

"Wild me these tempests of vaine love to flie,
And anchor fast my selfe on Vertue's shore.
Alas, if this the only mettall be
Of love new-coind to helpe my beggery,
Deare, love me not, that ye may love me more."

This is followed by a playful sonnet which, with many of the poems that tell us this sad story, is all the more appealingly human for very playfulness. Stella had said "No, no!" some loving advance of Sidney's. Accepting rebuff, Sidney reminds her of the old grammatical rule that two negatives make an affirmative :

". . . For late, with heart most high, with eyes most low,
I crav'd the thing which ever she denies ;
She, lightning love, displaying Venus' skies,
Least once should not be heard, twise said, No, No!
Sing then, my Muse, now Io Pæan sing ;
Heav'ns envy not at my high triumphing,
But grammer's force with sweet successe confirme :
For grammer sayes, — O this, deare Stella, say,—
For grammer sayes, — to grammer who sayes nay?—
That in one speech two negatives affirme!"

The reference is perhaps to an occasion still more poignantly celebrated in one of the songs, which the reader may care to find for himself—with the refrain :

> "Take me to thee, and thee to me :
> 'No, no, no, no, my Deare, let be.'"

It is evident that when Sidney determined to be Penelope's lover in earnest, he was impatient with half-measures, and it may well have seemed to his soldierly sense of action that such a husband as Lord Rich was a man to fight, and if necessary kill, for the release of such a wife. But Penelope, though later in life she was to take short cuts to a happiness perhaps less worthy than Sidney offered her, would give no ear to his desperate proposals. Once, we read, she was angry with him for some time because, having come upon her while she dozed, he had stolen a kiss. She seems to have forgiven him the theft, and afterwards on rare occasions, to have saved him from being again a thief by a timely gift. But the ardour and hopes which even such a guarded graciousness aroused in Sidney appear to have grown too perilous for her conscience, and in one of the sweetest reproofs in poetry—a reproof whose very tenderness means the very gift that is denied—she begs Sidney to desist : for her and honour's sake. I quote only a few verses, the artificial pastoral style of which must not disguise for the reader the vital significance beneath :

"In a grove most rich of shade,
Where birds wanton musicke made,
May, then yong, his pide weedes showing,
New-perfumed with flowers fresh growing:

"Astrophel with Stella sweete
Did for mutual comfort meete,
Both within themselves oppressèd,
But each in the other blessèd.

"Him great harmes had taught much care,
Her faire necke a foule yoke bare;
But her sight his cares did banish,
In his sight her yoke did vanish."

Astrophel growing too eager in his love, Stella thus admonishes him:

"Astrophel, sayd she, my love,
Cease, in these effects, to prove;
Now be still, yet still beleeve me,
Thy griefe more than death would grieve me.

"If that any thought in me
Can tast comfort but of thee,
Let me, fed with hellish anguish,
Joylesse, hopelesse, endlesse languish . . .

"If to secret of my hart,
I do any wish impart,
Where thou art not foremost placèd,
Be both wish and I defacèd.

"If more may be sayd, I say,
All my blisse in thee I lay;
If thou love, my love content thee.
For all love, all faith is meant thee.

"Trust me, while I thee deny,
In my selfe the smart I try;
Tyran honour doth thus use thee,
Stella's selfe might not refuse thee.

"Therefore, deere, this no more move,
Least, though I leave not thy love,
Which too deep in me is framèd,
I should blush when thou art namèd."

Did a loving woman ever deny her lover in words of more heavenly tenderness and purity, and did ever a lover interpret such a denial with so fine a touch? The whole poem seems to have a prophetic accent of Lovelace's famous cry a hundred years later:

"I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more."

But, mirror of chivalry and soul of honour as Sidney was, it seems to have taken him some time to accept the lesson Stella thus taught; and, indeed, it might well seem that the true honour was on the side of his honourable love rather than on the side of a dishonourable marriage. Indeed, when at last we find him bidding his noble farewell to the love that was the very life of his pure heart, the terms of his farewell do not indicate that he abandoned that love from any sense of its dishonour in that worldly sense of which Stella had reminded him, but because—as some saint might abandon the world for the service of God, or as some patriot might sacrifice his domestic ties to the service of his country—he had determined to abandon earthly love altogether. Stella could not, would not, be his, and as time

proved her determination to be irrevocable, Sidney in spite of all his ardent worship for her, could but at length come home to his own soul, and realize that for one of his soaring spirit and ambitious mind there was other employment than the soul-sickness of a disappointed lover. It was, we may imagine, with some such realization of his duties to himself, rather than in any recognition of unworthiness in a love that can never have seemed other than sacred to him, that he wrote this sonnet, in which the love story of Astrophel and Stella is, as it were, carried up to heaven with strains of angelic music :

"Leave me, O Love, which reachest but to dust ;
And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things ;
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust ;
What ever fades, but fading pleasure brings.
Draw in thy beames, and humble all thy might
To that sweet yoke where lasting freedomes be ;
Which breakes the clowdes, and opens forth the light,
That doth both shine, and give us sight to see.
O take fast hold ; let that light be thy guide
In this small course which birth drawes out to death,
And think how evill becommeth him to slide,
Who seeketh heav'n, and comes of heav'nly breath.
Then farewell, world ; thy uttermost I see :
Eternall Love, maintaine thy life in me."

That Sidney, indeed, found himself, and that he devoted the few remaining years of his life to the "great cause which needs both use and art," to which he refers in the last sonnet but one, and which, if at the moment of his writing it had

a more particular meaning, is for us to-day sufficiently particularized as the service of his country, is well enough known from the familiar histories. It was probably in the autumn of 1581 that Astrophel took that solemn farewell of his Stella. That he was married in the March of 1583 to Frances, daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham, does not seem to be a fact of any special significance to our story. Disappointed lovers usually marry, and Sidney was now once more a distinguished man of this world, who might necessarily wish to marry for many reasons—none of which need be counted forgetfulness of Stella. On the 17th of October, 1586, he died, as all school-children know, from a wound inflicted at the battle of Zutphen on September 22nd—and even in his own day so romantic seemed the death of such a man, that although he was, in a sense, only a private gentleman of no great official importance, he was buried like a king in old St. Paul's. The Court wore mourning for him, and it is pleasant to read that Stella's grief was naked and unashamed.

Poor Stella! Her after-life reads like a curious paradox. In spite of her husband's brutality she remained his faithful wife for some nine years after Sidney's death. But about this time she formed an attachment for Sir Christopher Blount, and the virtue which had resisted Sidney succumbed to him. She fled with her lover and lived publicly with him for many years, finally

being divorced from Lord Rich and sharing with Blount his subsequent honours as Earl of Devonshire and his ultimate disgrace. One may be pardoned for wishing for Sidney's sake that her virtue had withstood to the end. Yet no doubt, the simple answer is that she loved Blount better than she loved Sidney. If, like Astrophel, you love a star, you must be content to see it shine. It is very seldom that the star will love you in return.

IV

SHELLEY AND MARY GODWIN

THE piteous end of Shelley's first wife, Harriet Westbrook, has naturally deflected the sympathy of the world in her direction; and it is, of course, well that we should give ear to the plea on her behalf so beautifully made by Mr. William Watson:

> "A star looked down from heaven and loved a flower
> Grown in earth's garden—loved it for an hour;
> O you that watch his orbit in the spheres,
> Refuse not to a ruined rosebud tears."

Yet there was really no danger of the world refusing its tears to that ruined rosebud. The danger has rather been that in giving its sympathy to Harriet it has somewhat forgotten that Shelley and Mary had a claim on its sympathy too, and really a more serious claim. Stars have their rights as well as rosebuds, and, if Shelley's marriage with Harriet was a tragic mistake for Harriet, it was surely no less tragic a mistake for Shelley. To find oneself married to the wrong woman at the early age of nineteen is a terrible enough mistake to begin one's life with for any man. For a nature such as Shelley's it was a spiritual tragedy of the most serious kind.

When, at last, it was clearly seen that the mistake was past mending—and seen the more clearly by Shelley, because in meeting Mary Godwin he felt, and felt rightly, that he had met his true mate—Shelley saw but one way out, and surely there was no other way. Life with Harriet had become impossible for both of them. That they had made a schoolboy and schoolgirl mistake seemed no reason for their perpetuating and aggravating it. Love could alone justify their continuing together, and their illusive love was dead.

Was a false marriage to stand in the way of a true marriage? Shelley and Mary decided that it should not, and, though the world of their day was against them, time has been on their side. Their love story has come to have a value for humanity at large. It belongs to the important world-series of First Examples. Many lovers, indeed, before Shelley and Mary, had taken the law into their own hands, but the difference between their stories and this story is that they have rather represented lawlessness, whereas Shelley and Mary break an old law only to make a new and better law, or at least merely to illustrate its necessity. Shelley and Mary stand, not so much for rebellious passion, as for common sense in the regulation of the difficult partnership of the sexes. They represent the right of human beings to correct their matrimonial mistakes, a right even yet stupidly and superstitiously denied. Their example was not, as often misrepresented,

in favour of any facile promiscuity. Quite the reverse, its significance was that of a marriage conceived on the principles of the only real monogamy, an instinctive monogamy, based on natural selection, spiritual, mental, and physical—a spontaneous, even an eager, monogamy, and not merely an arbitrary legal fiat. Of all people, Shelley and Mary held the doctrine of One Man for One Woman—only, they insisted, it must be the Right Man for the Right Woman.

Shelley first became acquainted with Harriet through his sister Mary, who was her schoolmate at Mrs. Fenning's genteel academy for young ladies, at Church House, Clapham. In January 1811, Shelley had called at the schoolhouse with a letter of introduction to Harriet, and also a present to her from Mary. Harriet was then about fifteen and a half, Shelley about eighteen and a half. Harriet was sixteen on August first and Shelley nineteen on August fourth. Harriet appears to have been a pretty, attractive girl, of what one might call the May queen type. Good-natured, bright in her manner, and accomplished after polite boarding-school standards, she was the typical, pretty, popular queen of the school. Her nature, while essentially commonplace, was sympathetically open to the influence of more definite natures, and capable, chameleon-like, of taking its colour from her intimates—a pleasing but dangerous gift. She was the daughter of an

ohn Westbrook, a retired "coffee-house" keeper —otherwise publican—a man so Jewish in appearnce as to be nicknamed "Jew Westbrook." Her nother counted for nothing, and her home was uled jointly by her father and a forbidding sister, liza Westbrook, a narrow-minded, strong-willed, nd common-natured woman, at least twice her ge. It was, of course, well known at Mrs. Fenning's chool that the fantastic young poet who occasionlly called there to see his sisters, was heir to a aronetcy and six thousand pounds a year. Shelley, ery susceptible—and pathetically young—was uickly attracted by Harriet's engaging, popular ays and her pretty simulation of a mind; and it as only human nature that Eliza Westbrook nould dream of, and even plan for, this possible ristocratic alliance for her sister.

Shelley had lost no time in filling poor Harriet's ead with his very youthful rationalism on every ubject, from theology to vegetarianism. At first, Iarriet had been horrified to hear him call himelf an "atheist"—one of his favourite misepresentations of himself. If ever there was a ind less accurately answering to all that the word atheist" carries with it, it was Shelley's—but Iarriet became accustomed to the terrible word efore long, and in a few weeks began really to ink that she thought the same as Shelley. She ad, at all events, superficially assimilated his views fficiently to suffer some persecution for them at

school, and, it was said, in her own home. Thi
" persecution " was all that was needed to mak
Shelley conceive himself her champion and pro
tector, and it was a boyish chivalry, as noble a
it was unwise, rather than the impulse of love
that prompted Shelley to take the false step o
marrying Harriet.

Long before Shelley had met Mary, life wit
Harriet had become impossible for him, and, eve
if Mary had not entered into the story, it is highl
improbable that Shelley and Harriet could hav
continued to live together. It must be added, too
that before he finally parted from her, Shelle
firmly believed, rightly or wrongly, that Harrie
had been unfaithful to him; also that he wa
scrupulously careful to make proper provisio
for her after their separation; that he believed
too, that she desired the separation no less tha
himself; and finally, that Harriet's suicide wa
not the direct result of Shelley's leaving her, bu
the result of her desertion by a subsequent lover.

Shelley had been married to Harriet on Augus
28, 1811—" the united ages of bride and bride
groom," as has been said, " making thirty-five.
It was in May or June of 1814 that he first sa
Mary, when already the distress and disappoint
ment of his marriage were weighing heavily o
his heart and mind. The daughter of Mar
Wollstonecraft and William Godwin, brought u
in an atmosphere of intellectual freedom, an

deed, so to say, heiress to a revolutionary tra-
tion, was naturally predisposed toward the sad
ung rebel, who not only looked up to her father
his master, but was giving such unselfish proof
his reverence by that generous financial assist-
nce which Godwin was never ashamed to seek
-even when, with preposterous moral loftiness,
e was ostentatiously disapproving of Shelley's
ve for his daughter. It was during one of
elley's calls on Godwin, for the purpose of thus
sisting him, that he saw Mary for the first time.
e was in her seventeenth year, and is thus de-
ribed by Professor Dowden: "Shapely, golden
ad, a face very pale and pure, great forehead,
rnest hazel eyes, and an expression at once of
nsibility and firmness about her delicately curved
s." Her nature was more conservative than
at of either her father or her mother, which
ade her all the more suitable as a wife for Shelley,
th his inflammable idealism and headlong ex-
rimentalism. She seems, too, to have combined
firm mental balance with powers of strong
eling which were deep, but not demonstrative,
d Hogg, a shrewd observer, was struck by the
pressive quietness of her manner. Here is an
tract from his account of a call which he and
elley made at Godwin's house, in Skinner Street,
June 8, 1814. Godwin was out, and, while
ey awaited his return, Shelley impatiently paced
and, down the room:

"He appeared to be displeased," writes Hogg in his ironical manner, "at not finding th fountain of Political Justice. 'Where is Godwin ? he asked me several times, as if I knew. I di not know, and, to say the truth, I did nc care. He continued his uneasy promenade; an I stood reading the names of old English autho on the backs of the venerable volumes, whe the door was partially and softly opened. thrilling voice called: 'Shelley!' A thrillin voice answered: 'Mary!' And he darted out c the room, like an arrow from the bow of the fa shooting king. A very young female, fair an fair-haired, pale indeed, and with a piercing loo wearing a frock of tartan, an unusual dress in Londc at that time, had called him out of the room. H was absent a very short time—a minute or twc and then returned. 'Godwin is out; there is r use in waiting.' So we continued our walk alor Holborn. 'Who was that, pray ?' I asked; ' daughter ?' 'Yes.' 'A daughter of Willia Godwin ?' 'The daughter of Godwin and Mary This was the first time . . . that I beheld a ve distinguished lady, of whom I have much to s hereafter. It was but the glance of a momen through a door partly opened. Her quietne certainly struck me, and possibly also, for I a not quite sure on that point, her pale, piercir look."

Before the end of June, Shelley was writing verses
o her like these :

"Mine eyes were dim with tears unshed ;
Yes, I was firm—thus wert not thou ;
My baffled looks did fear yet dread
To meet thy looks—I could not know
How anxiously they sought to shine
With soothing pity upon mine.

"To sit and curb the soul's mute rage
Which preys upon itself alone ;
To curse the life which is the cage
Of fettered grief that dares not groan,
Hiding from many a careless eye
The scornèd load of agony.

"Upon my heart thy accents sweet,
Of peace and pity, fell like dew
"On flowers half dead ;—thy lips did meet
Mine tremblingly ; thy dark eyes threw
Thy soft persuasion on my brain,
Charming away its dream of pain.

"We are not happy ! sweet ; our state
Is strange and full of doubt and fear ;
More need of words that ills abate ;
Reserve or censure come not near
Our sacred friendship, lest there be
No solace left for thee and me."

Mary was devoted to the memory of her mother,
hom she had never seen, as she had died when
Iary was born. Her stepmother, the second
Irs. Godwin, was not sympathetic to her, and
ne of Mary's favourite haunts was her mother's
rave in St. Pancras churchyard, then situated
mong green fields, and not as now in the lap of
ilway termini. She would often sit there, reading

and enjoying that solitude which is so hard to get among the living; and it is not improbable that Shelley was aware of her solitude. And sentiment apart, could there have been a more appropriate altar for their love than the tomb of the brave woman who had courage when such unconventional courage as Mary Wollstonecraft's really meant something, not as now, when it is not only a drug in the market, but a hackneyed feminine device?

To the dispassionate onlooker Mary Godwin may lack certain qualities which are popularly supposed to inspire great passions in men. There was a certain primness about her. She had been begotten, so to say, on revolutionary principles and there was the taint of propaganda about her. Still Shelley, assuredly, had no distaste for propaganda, and Mary was a woman too.

Anyone capable of comprehending the situation can well understand, and sympathize in, the joy Shelley must have felt at meeting, for the first time in his life, the positive—not merely the placidly corroborative—feminine of himself. Harriet had been the prettiest of mental parrots. But Shelley—who, for all his idealism, was no fool—knew that he had made her, knew that she was to him merely a ventriloquist's dummy of the mind. To meet a woman who could really talk back to him, a woman who had not learnt all from him, a woman whose mind was no mere

eminine clay in the hands of the masculine potter, nd a woman, too, who was also—a woman, gifted ith charm and mystery and motherhood! Surely helley, of all men, merited the true wife of himelf. It was as absurd as it was unhappy that he hould have mated with a plump, little, rose-pink choolgirl like Harriet. And oh, the wonderful efreshment and stimulus of Mary!

A copy of "Queen Mab" is in existence, given y Shelley to Mary, thus inscribed: "Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, P. B. S. . . . You see, Mary, have not forgotten you." On a fly-leaf, at the nd of the volume, is this impassioned avowal, n Mary's handwriting, dated July, 1814: "This ook is sacred to me, and as no other creature shall ver look into it, I may write in it what I please—et, what shall I write—that I love the author eyond all powers of expression, and that I am arted from him, dearest and only love. By that ove we have promised to each other, although may not be yours, I can never be another's. ut I am thine, exclusively thine.

"'By the kiss of love, the glance none saw beside,
The smile none else might understand,
The whispered thought of hearts allied,
The pressure of the thrilling hand,'

have pledged myself to thee, and sacred is the ift. I remember your words—'You are now, Iary, going to mix with many, and, for a moment, shall depart, but in the solitude of your chamber

I shall be with you '—yes, you are ever with me sacred vision—

> "'But ah! I feel in this was given
> A blessing never meant for me;
> Thou art too like a dream from heaven
> For earthly love to merit thee.'"

Very soon Shelley was definitely to admit tha there was no life for him apart from Mary. Harrie was out of London in July, and on July 14t Shelley wrote, begging her to come to town When she came, he opened his mind and heart t her. Their marriage was a failure, and he suggeste that they should part, though he would, of course continue to provide for her, and saw no reason wh they should not remain true and affectionat friends to each other. Harriet, who was ex pecting her second child in December, was mad quite ill by the disclosure, and, for some day Shelley was distracted between tenderness an pity for her, and his love for Mary. Harrie woman-like, threw all the blame on Mary, thoug we know that Mary was in no way the initi cause of Shelley's separation from Harriet, separation to which it would seem Harriet ha not explicitly agreed, though she may have ac cepted it as the inevitable. The presence of h sister at her sick bedside would not help to men matters, and, therefore, by July 27, 1814, Shelle and Mary had decided that they must act courag ously, according to their own sense of right. Betwee

four and five o'clock on the morning of July 28, 1814, Mary and Shelley—accompanied by Jane Clairmont, the second Mrs. Godwin's daughter by a former marriage—were starting for Dover, on their way to the Continent. Mary and Jane Clairmont left the house as if for a morning walk, and met Shelley at the corner of Hatton Garden, William Godwin having no suspicion of what was afoot.

Shelley's account of their flight in his journal still beats like a heart with the breathless excitement, the tremulous joy and fear, of the occasion. Here are one or two extracts :

"July 28.—The night preceding this morning, all being decided, I ordered a chaise to be ready by four o'clock. I watched until the lightning and the stars became pale. At length it was four. I believed it not possible that we should succeed ; still there appeared to lurk some danger even in certainty. I went ; I saw her ; she came to me. Yet one quarter of an hour remained. Still some arrangement must be made, and she left me for a short time. How dreadful did this time appear ; it seemed that we trifled with life and hope ; a few minutes passed ; she was in my arms—we were safe ; we were on our road to Dover. . . .

"At Dartford we took four horses, that we might outstrip pursuit. We arrived at Dover before four o'clock. Some time was necessarily expended in consideration—in dinner—in bargaining

with sailors and custom-house officers. At length we engaged a small boat to convey us to Calais; it was ready by six o'clock. The evening was most beautiful; the sands slowly receded; we felt safe. . . ."

They had a stormy and even dangerous passage. Shelley continues:

"Mary did not know our danger; she was resting, between my knees, that were unable to support her; she did not speak or look, but I felt that she was there. . . . The morning broke, the lightning died away, the violence of the wind abated. We arrived at Calais, whilst Mary still slept; we drove upon the sands. Suddenly, the broad sun rose over France.

"Friday, July 29.—I said, 'Mary, look; the sun rises over France.' We walked over the sands to the inn. . . ."

"Mary, look; the sun rises over France." How full of hope and the exaltation of the new great life, at last really begun, are the words! Nor was the future to disappoint the hopes of that happy dawn. Shelley and Mary had lived side by side for nearly eight years, when, on July 8, 1822, death so cruelly separated them, and though, indeed, their married life was not without some passing shadows such as must occasionally darken even the closest and happiest union of two natures each so strongly individual, there never seems to have been a doubt in either heart that they

vere each other's true and final mate, and that hey had done what life meant them to do in aking each other in defiance of the common isages of the world. Mary, indeed, is clearly een to have been the ideal wife for Shelley, par- icularly in the wisdom with which she took the ccasional — purely Platonic — passions for other vomen to which his poet's sensibility made him able. Possibly his very enraptured feeling for he Countess Emilia Viviani made the greatest emands on Mary's powers of "understanding" im, but Mary loved his work too well to be jealous f a feeling that had inspired, perhaps, the loftiest ove poem in English—"Epipsychidion." She new of what a poet's heart is made, how passion- tely sensitive to beauty, how subject to passing motional possessions, and she knew that only so ould a poet create for us his beautiful dreams. t was for a poet's wife to understand a poet's ature, and Mary understood. She knew that hatever light of beauty should attract his eyes or a moment, she was, as he had called her in he beautiful dedication to "The Revolt of Islam" -his "own heart's home":

> "So now my summer task is ended, Mary,
> And I return to thee, mine own heart's home;
> As to his Queen some victor Knight of Faëry,
> Earning bright spoils for her enchanted dome. . . ."

V

JOHN KEATS AND FANNY BRAWNE

IT is surprising that the love stories of grea poets should so often disappoint the romanti —and, one may add, the æsthetic—sense From such lovers of love, and such passionist of beauty, one naturally expects not only th ideal passion, but the ideal object. Of all poet one would say this of John Keats, the one poe whose name has come to be synonymous wit beauty; and it is certainly a particularly ironica paradox that the lady irritatingly associated wit his name should be the least congruous of a the many commonplace women transfigured b the genius they could not understand, and th love of which they were not worthy. Most wome honoured by the love of great poets have at lea been inoffensive, placidly pretty, domestically de voted. They have been that, or they have been- devils. To both statements, there are, of cours exceptions. Generally speaking, they have bee neither beautiful nor intelligent. The poor poe of course, thought they were both—because h was a poet. A poet would hardly be a poet

ıe did not make such divinely absurd mistakes, nd one might almost state it as the first necessity of his being a poet at all that he should make that grand mistake about the woman he loves. In his respect, the English poets have been particularly fortunate. Beatrice and Laura were ndeed graceful nonentities, but there is something dainty and distinguished about their names hat allows us to think of them without impatience s decorative and docile adjectives to the great ıames with which they are pathetically linked. One could mention no few poets of other nations who have succeeded in giving the names of the women they loved a significance hardly second to heir own. But with such exceptions as, say Shelley and Browning, Rossetti and William Morris, he English poets have proved singularly unable o sing their loves up among the stars. Of course, here is—Ann Hathaway. And there is also—Fanny Brawne.

Probably the reason of this is that most English oets have sprung from the middle classes, were orn in the provinces, or lived in the suburbs. Beautiful women are born either among the very ich or the very poor. The English poet, as a rule, as been born between these extremes, and his lines ave fallen neither in Mayfair nor Whitechapel—ut in Clapham. He has come in contact neither vith the noble lady nor the beautiful peasant. His German-silver fate has been the water-colour

miss of the academies for young ladies. Shelley met such a fate in silly little Harriet Westbrook, and Keats met another in the still sillier Fanny Brawne.

Fame, that loves to humour its poets, has consented to glorify the names of many unimportant poor relations of genius, but there has never been a more insignificant name upon its lips than the name of Fanny Brawne. But John Keats loved a suburban miss of that name—and, perforce, Time, and perhaps even Eternity, must do her honour. One writes so, remembering not only the tortures to which she subjected a noble spirit with her dancing-class coquetries, but remembering, too, this passage in Sir Charles Dilke's Memoirs of his grandfather :

" Keats died admired only by his personal friends and by Shelley ; and even ten years after his death when the first memoir was proposed, the woman he had loved had so little belief in his poetic reputation that she wrote to Mr. Dilke, ' The kindest act would be to let him rest for ever in the obscurity to which circumstances have condemned him.' "

Ten years after his death the woman whom Endymion loved was still unable, not only to appreciate " the ode to a Grecian urn," but the immortal honour he had done her. Such an utterance makes one wish that Keats had lived a year or two longer, not for the sake of his work—for he could have reached no higher perfection—but to recover from an absurd infatuation, which began

n calf-love and grew hysterical with the advance f inherited consumption. That Keats would have ecovered from his suburban passion, and passed on o some higher and completer love, his letters to anny Brawne herself sufficiently prove. So long s he was comparatively well and occupied with oetry, he absented himself from the felicity of her resence with a prosaic deliberation which must ave seemed strangely unloverlike to "La Belle ame Sans Merci." It was only when illness gave neurotic intensity to all his feelings that Fanny rawne gained a painful importance. The sick ave many fancies. When Keats was himself, efore that drop of arterial blood upon the sheet, hich told the surgical-student poet that he must ie, he wrote like this to his happily married rother George: "Notwithstanding your happiess and your recommendations, I hope I shall ever marry: though the most beautiful creature ere waiting for me at the end of a journey or a alk; though the carpet were of silk, and the curtains f the morning clouds, the chairs and sofas stuffed ith cygnet's down, the food manna, the wine beond claret, the window opening on Winandermere, should not feel, or rather my happiness should not e, so fine; my solitude is sublime—for, instead of hat I have described, there is a sublimity to welome me home; the roaring of the wind is my ife; and the stars through my window-panes are y children; the mighty abstract Idea of Beauty

in all things, I have, stifles the more divided and minute domestic happiness. An amiable wife and sweet children I contemplate as part of that Beauty, but I must have a thousand of those beautiful particles to fill up my heart. . . . Those things combined with the opinion I have formed of the generality of women, who appear to me as children to whom I would rather give a sugar-plum than my time, form a barrier against matrimony which I rejoice in. . . ."

Yet before this he had met a beautiful girl whom history would fain substitute for Fanny Brawne, and for whom awhile she was mistaken, a beautiful girl whom he thus vividly describes: "She is not a Cleopatra, but is, at least, a Charmian; she has a rich Eastern look; she has fine eyes, and fine manners. When she comes into a room she makes the same impression as the beauty of a leopardess. She is too fine and too conscious of herself to repulse any man who may address her; from habit she thinks that *nothing particular*. I always find myself more at ease with such a woman; the picture before me always gives me a life and animation, which I cannot possibly feel with anything inferior. I am, at such times, too much occupied in admiring to be awkward or in a tremble; I forget myself entirely, because I live in her. You will, by this time, think I am in love with her, so, before I go any further, I will tell you I am not. She kept me awake one night, as a tune of

Mozart's might do. I speak of the thing as a pastime and an amusement, than which I can feel none deeper than a conversation with an imperial woman, the very 'yes' and 'no' of whose life is to me a banquet. I don't cry to take the moon home with me in my pocket, nor do I fret to leave her behind me. I like her, and her like, because one has no *sensations:* what we both are is taken for granted."

Critics for some time mistook this for a description of Fanny Brawne, but it has since transpired that Keats was here describing a Miss Charlotte (or, according to Rossetti, Jane) Coxe.

His first impression—or inventory—of Miss Brawne was, indeed, by no means so complimentary.

"Shall I give you Miss —— ? She is about my height, with a fine style of countenance of the lengthened sort; she wants sentiment in every feature; she manages to make her hair look well; her nostrils are very fine, though a little painful; her mouth is bad and good; her profile is better than her full face, which, indeed, is not full, but pale and thin, without showing any bone; her shape is very graceful, and so are her movements; her arms are good, her hands bad-ish, her feet tolerable. She is not seventeen, but she is ignorant; monstrous in her behaviour, flying out in all directions, calling people such names that I was forced lately to make use of the term—Minx: this is, I think, from no innate vice, but from a penchant she has for acting stylishly. I am,

however, tired of such style, and shall declin any more of it. She had a friend to visit he lately; you have known plenty such—she play the music, but without one sensation but th feel of the ivory at her fingers; she is a down right Miss, without one set-off. We hated her and smoked her, and baited her, and, I think drove her away. Miss —— thinks her a paragon of fashion, and says she is the only woman in th world she would change persons with. What shape—she is as superior as a rose to a dandelion."

This verbal description tallies, almost with exactness, with the only extant portrait of Mis Brawne, a silhouette by M. Edouart, which Mr Sidney Colvin thus convincingly puts into words "A brisk and blooming, very young beauty, of th far from uncommon English-hawk blonde type with aquiline nose and retreating forehead, sharp cut nostril and gray-blue eye, a slight, shapely figure rather short than tall, a taking smile and good hair, carriage and complexion."

It is rather a pity that Miss Brawne's letter have not been preserved, though it would not b difficult, I think, to imagine them. It is no necessary to be Keats to have received such colourless young-lady-like scrawls—which, poor fellow, he doubtless, kissed and treasured, "even as you an I." Yet, it must not be thought that Miss Brawn was without character or parts. On the contrary she seems, from Mr. Buxton Forman's naïv

escription, to have been something like a virago
f the accomplishments. " She had the gift of in-
ependence or self-sufficingness in a high degree,"
ys the good Mr. Forman, " and it was not easy
o turn her from a settled purpose. Without being in
eneral a systematic student, she was a voluminous
eader in widely varying branches of literature;
nd some out-of-the-way subjects she followed
p with great perseverance. One of her strong
oints of learning was the history of costume, in
hich she was so well read as to be able to answer
ny question of detail at a moment's notice. . . .
he was an eager politician, with very strong
onvictions, fiery and animated in discussion; a
haracteristic she preserved till the end."

Whatever else Fanny Brawne lacked, Mr. Forman
ishes us to remember that " one of her strong points
f learning was the history of costume, etc. . . ."—
so that " she was an eager politician. . . ."

O weep for Adonais!

Mr. Forman is nothing if not gallant—but
ow it is perhaps time to remember that John
eats loved this Fanny Brawne.

He loved her—yes! —and yet!

Yes! In his second letter [10 July, 1819] he
rites: " I never knew before, what such a love
you have made me feel was; I did not believe
it; my Fanny was afraid of it, lest it should
urn me up."

In his third letter [27 July, 1819] he writes:

"You absorb me in spite of myself—you alone for I look not forward with any pleasure to what i call'd being settled in the world; I tremble a domestic cares—yet for you I would meet them though if it would leave you the happier I woul rather die than do so. I have two luxuries t brood over in my walks, your Loveliness and th hour of my death. O that I could have possessio of them both in the same minute."

In the fifth letter, dated Winchester, Augus 16, however, we find that John Keats has bee at Winchester four days, and yet has not writte to his lady. With almost clumsy frankness— even harshness, as he admits—he confesses tha poetry has got hold of him, with so imperious preoccupation that he could at the moment n more write "soothing words" to Fanny Brawn than if he were "engaged in a charge of cavalry. Continually afterwards we find him placing h work on his poems before her. He dare not se her lest she should distract him from his maste piece. And later, when he falls ill, we find hin for a lover, curiously cautious. He seems indee to have been as careful of his health as of h poetry; for, although the two lovers lived ne door to each other at Hampstead, Keats was afraid of the perturbation of his lady's presenc that days and days went by without his venturin to allow her to pay him a brief call; and he seen well content to have her written "Good night

r to see her from his window. The only apparent
itality of his love was his unreasonable jealousy
f his friend, Charles Brown; which was merely
sign of that coming neurosis through whose
xaggeration Fanny Brawne was to seem so patheti-
lly more important than she really was, or ever
ould have been, had he not been so sick a man.

That Keats *thought* he loved Fanny Brawne
is letters to others, rather than his official love-
tters to her, vehemently, even hysterically, prove.
here is no doubt that he believed he was dying
—her! To Charles Brown—the friend of whom
e had been jealous, and yet to whom he wrote
s last letters—he wrote on November 1, 1820:
As I have gone thus far into it, I must go on a
ttle—perhaps it may relieve the load of *wretched-*
ss which presses upon me. The persuasion that
shall see her no more will kill me. My dear
rown, I should have had her when I was in health,
nd I should have remained well. I can bear to
e—I cannot bear to leave her. Oh, God! God!
od! Everything that I have in my trunks that
minds me of her goes through me like a spear.
he silk lining she put in my travelling cap scalds
y head. My imagination is horribly vivid about
r—I see her—I hear her. There is nothing in the
orld of sufficient interest to divert me from her
moment. . . . O that I could be buried near
here she lives! I am afraid to write to her—
receive a letter from her—to see her hand-

writing would break my heart—even to hear of her anyhow, to see her name written, would be more than I can bear. My dear Brown, what am I to do? Where can I look for consolation or ease? If I had any chance of recovery, this passion would kill me."

Also, there need be no doubt that, when Keats sailed from England for the last time, on the *Maria Crowther*, bound for Pisa, on September 18, 1820, he was thinking of Fanny Brawne as he wrote his last and greatest sonnet:

"Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art!
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors:
No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever—or else swoon to death."

It is strange to think that such infinitesimal femininity as Fanny Brawne should inspire a dying man to write such undying words—O! why were they not written to Cleopatra—or "at least a Charmian!"—but the heart of the poet is a divine mystery.

VI

HEINE AND MATHILDE

THE love story of Heine and his Mathilde is another of those stories which fix a type of loving. It is the love of a man of the most brilliant genius, the most relentless, mocking intellect, for a simple, pretty woman, who could no more understand him than a cow can understand a comet. Many men of genius have loved just such women, and the world, of course, has wondered. How is it that men of genius prefer some little Mathilde, when the presidents of so many women's clubs are theirs for the asking? Perhaps the problem is not so difficult as, at first sight, it may seem. After all, a man of genius is much like other men. He is no more anxious than any other man to marry an encyclopædia, or a university degree. And, more than most men, he is fitted to realize the mysterious importance and satisfaction of simple beauty—though it may go quite unaccompanied by "intellectual" conversation—and the value of simple woman-goodness, the woman-goodness that orders a household so skilfully that your home is a work of art, the woman-

goodness that glories in that "simple" thing we call motherhood, the woman-goodness that is almost happy when you are ill because it will be so wonderful to nurse you. Superior persons often smile at these Mathildes of the great. They have smiled no little at Mathilde Crescence Mirat; but he who was perhaps the greatest mocker that ever lived knew better than to laugh at Mathilde. The abysses of his brain no one can, or even dare, explore—but, listen as we will at the door of that infernal pit of laughter, we shall hear no laugh against his faithful little Mathilde. It is not at Mathilde he laughs, but at the precious little blue-stocking, who freshened the last months of his life with a final infatuation—that still unidentified "Camille Selden" whom he playfully called "la Mouche."

"La Mouche," naturally, had a very poor opinion of Madame Heine, and you need not be a cynic to enjoy this passage with which she opens her famous remembrances of "The Last Days of Heinrich Heine":

"When I first saw Heinrich Heine he lived on the fifth floor of a house situated in the Avenue Matignon, not far from the Rond-Point of the Champs-Elysées. His windows, overlooking the avenue, opened on a narrow balcony, covered in hot weather with a striped linen awning, such as appears in front of small cafés. The apartments consisted of three or four rooms—the dining-room

and two rooms used by the master and the mistress of the house. A very low couch, behind a screen encased in wall-paper, several chairs, and opposite the door a walnut-wood secretary, formed the entire furniture of the invalid's chamber. I nearly forgot to mention two framed engravings, dated from the early years of Louis Philippe's reign—the 'Reapers' and the 'Fisherman,' after Leopold Robert. So far the arrangements of the rooms evidenced no trace of a woman's presence, which showed itself in the adjoining chamber by a display of imitation lace, lined with transparent yellow muslin, and a corner-cupboard covered with brown velvet, and more especially by a full-length portrait, placed in a good light, of Mme. Heine, with dress and hair as worn in her youth—a low-necked black bodice, and bands of hair plastered down her cheeks—a style in the fashion of about 1840.

"She by no means realized my ideal Mme. Heine. I had fancied her refined, elegant, languishing, with a pale, earnest face, animated by large, perfidious, velvety eyes. I saw, instead, a homely, dark, stout lady, with a high colour and a jovial countenance, a person of whom you would say she required plenty of exercise in the open air. What a painful contrast between the robust woman and the pale, dying man, who, with one foot already in the grave, summoned sufficient energy to earn not only enough for the daily bread,

but money besides to purchase beautiful dresses. The melancholy jests, which obliging biographers constantly represent as flashes of wit from a husband too much in love not to be profuse, never deluded anybody who visited that home. It is absurd to transform Mme. Heine into an idyllic character, whilst the poet himself never dreamed of representing her in that guise. Why poetize at the expense of truth?—especially when truth brings more honour to the poet's memory."

One is sorry that Heine has not risen again to enjoy this. One can easily picture his reading it and, turning tenderly to his "Treasure," his "Heart's Joy," with that everlasting boy's look on his face, saying: "Never mind, Damschen. We know, don't we? They think they know, but we *know*." And with what a terrible snarl he would say, "My ideal Mme. Heine!"

"My ideal Mme. Heine!" No doubt "la Mouche" thought she might have been that, had all the circumstances been different, had Heine not already been married for years, and had he not been a dying man. We may be quite sure what Heine would have thought of the matter, and quite sure what she was to him. Mathilde, we know, was unhappy about the visits of the smart young lady who talked Shakespeare and the musical glasses so glibly, and who held her husband's hand as he lay on his mattress-grave, and wore a general air of providing him with that intellectual com-

anionship which was so painfully lacking in his ome. Yet we who know the whole story, and now her husband far better than she, know how ttle she really had to fear from the visits of Camille Selden." To Heine "la Mouche" was nerely a brilliant flower, with the dew of youth pon her. His gloomy room lit up as she entered, nd smelled sweet of her young womanhood hours fter she had gone. But "the ideal Mme. Heine"? Jo! Heine had found his real Mme. Heine, the oman who had been faithful to him for years, ad faced poverty and calumny with him, and had ursed him with laughing patience, day in and ay out, for years. Heine had good reason for nowing how "the ideal Mme. Heine" would have eated him under such circumstances; for little asbleu "Mouche" had only to have a bad cold stay away from the bedside of her hero, though e knew how he was counting the minutes to her oming, in the nervous, hysterical fashion of the valid. One of his bitterest letters reproaches her ith having kept him waiting in this way:

"Tear my sides, my chest, my face, with red-hot ncers, flay me alive, shoot, stone me, rather than ep me waiting.

"With all imaginable torture, cruelly break my mbs, but do not keep me waiting, for of all rments disappointed expectation is the most inful. I expected thee all yesterday afternoon til six o'clock, but thou didst not come, thou

witch, and I grew almost mad. Impatience encircled me like the folds of a viper, and I bounded on my couch at every ring, but oh! mortal anguish, it did not bring thee.

"Thou didst fail to come; I fret, I fume, and Satanas whispered mockingly in my ear—'The charming lotus-flower makes fun of thee, thou old fool!'"

"Camille Selden" made the mistake of her life when she imagined that Heine loved her and did not love that somewhat stout and high-coloured Mme. Heine, who had such bad taste in lace and literature.

Mathilde, as we know, was far from being Heine's first love. She was more important—his last. Heine himself tells us that from his boyhood he had been dangerously susceptible to women. He had tried many cures for the disease, but finally came to the conclusion that "woman is the best antidote to woman"—though "to be sure, this is driving out Satan with Beelzebub." There had been many loves in Heine's life before, one day in the Quartier Latin, somewhere in the year 1835, he had met saucy, laughing Mathilde Crescence Mirat. There had been "red Sefchen," the executioner's daughter, whose red hair as she wound it round her throat fascinated Heine with its grim suggestion of blood. There had been his cousin 'Amalie, whose marriage to another is said to have been the secret spring of

orrow by which Heine's laughter was fed. And here had been others, whose names—imaginary, naybe, in that they were doubtless the imaginary ames of real women—are familiar to all readers of Heine's poetry: Séraphine, Angélique, Diane, Hortense, Clarisse, Emma, and so on.

But she is loved best who is loved last; and when, fter those months of delirious dissipation in Paris, vhich all too soon were to be so exorbitantly paid or by years of suffering, Heine met Mathilde, there s no doubt at all that Heine met his wife. His eminiscent fancy might sentimentalize about his ost Amalie, but no one can read his letters, not o much to, as about, Mathilde without realizing hat he came as near to loving her as a man of his emperament can come near to loving anyone.

Though, to begin with, they were not married n the conventional sense, but "kept house" ogether in the fashion of the Quarter, there seems o question that Heine was faithful to Mathilde—o whom in his letters to his friends he always eferred as his "wife"—and that their relation, n everything but name, was a true marriage. ust before he met Mathilde, Heine had written o his friend and publisher, Campe, that he was at st sick to death of the poor pleasures which had eld him so long. "I believe," he writes, "that y soul is at last purified of all its dross; hence-orth my verses will be the more beautiful, my ooks the more harmonious. At all events, I know

this—that at the present moment everything impure and vulgar fills me with positive disgust."

It was at this moment, disgusted with those common illusions miscalled pleasure, that Heine met Mathilde, and was attracted by what one might call the fresh elementalism of her nature. That his love began with that fine intoxication of wonder and passion without which no love can endure, this letter to his friend August Lewald will show: "How can I apologize for not writing to you? And you are kind enough to offer me the good excuse that your letter must have been lost. No, I will confess the whole truth. I duly received it—but at a time when I was up to my neck in a love affair that I have not yet got out of. Since October nothing has been of any account with me that was not directly connected with this. I have neglected everything, I see nobody, and give a sigh whenever I think of my friends. . . . So I have often sighed to think that you must misunderstand my silence, yet I could not fairly set myself down to write. And that is all I can tell you to-day; for my cheeks are in such a flame, and my brain reels so with the scent of flowers, that I am in no condition to talk sensibly to you.

"Did you ever read King Solomon's Song? Just read it, and you will there find all I could say to-day."

So wrote Heine at the beginning of his love. When that love had been living for eight years, he

vas still writing in no less lover-like a fashion. My wife," says he to his brother Max in a letter ated April 12, 1843, "is a good child—natural, ay, capricious, as only French women can be, nd she never allows me for one moment to sink nto those melancholy reveries for which I have o strong a disposition."

When Heine wrote this letter, Mathilde had een his "legal" wife for something like a year nd a half. Heine had resorted to the formalizing f their union under the pressure of one of those ircumstances which compel a man to think more f a woman than of an idea. He was going to ght a duel with one of his and her cowardly erman traducers, and that there should be no oubt of her position in the event of his death e duly married her. Writing to his friend Lewald nce more, on the 13th of October, 1841, he says: You will have learned that, a few days before the uel, to make Mathilde's position secure, I felt it ght to turn my free marriage into a lawful one. his conjugal duel, which will never cease till the eath of one or the other of us, is far more perilous an any brief meeting with a Solomon Straus of ew Lane, Frankfort."

His friend Campe had been previously advised "my marriage with the lovely and honest eature who has lived by my side for years as lathilde Heine, was always respected and looked on as my wife, and was defiled by foul names

only by some scandal-loving Germans of the Frankfort clique."

Heine's duel resulted in nothing more serious than a flesh-wound on the hip. But alas! the wild months of dissipation before he had met Mathilde were before long to be paid for by that long, excruciating suffering which is one of the most heroic spectacles in the history of literature. It is the paradox of the mocker that he often displays the virtues and sentiments which he mocks, much more manfully than the professional sentimentalist. Courage and laughter are old friends, and Heine's laughter—his later laughter, at least—was perhaps mostly courage. If for no other reason, one would hope for a hereafter—so that Charles II. and Heine may have met and compared notes upon dying. Heine was indeed an "unconscionable long time a-dying," but then he died with such brilliant patience, with such good humour, and, in the meanwhile, contrived to write such haunting poetry, such saturnine criticism.

And, all the time, during those ten years of dying, his faithful "Treasure" was by his side. The people who "understood" him better, who read his books and delighted in his genius, somehow or other seemed to forget the lonely Prometheus on the mattress-rock at No. 3 Avenue Matignon. It was 1854 when Heine was painfully removed there. It was so long ago as the May of 1848 that he had walked out for the last time. His difficult steps had

aken him to the Louvre, and, broken in body and erves—but never in spirit—he had burst into ears before the Venus of Milo. It was a character- tic pilgrimage—though it was only a "Mouche" ho could have taken Heine seriously when he said hat he loved only statues and dead women. There as obviously a deep strain of the macabre and the izarre in Heine's nature; but it must never be orgotten that he loved his Mathilde as well.

That Heine was under no illusion about Mathilde, is letters show. He would laugh at her on occasion, nd even be a little bitter; but if we are not to ugh at those we love, whom are we to laugh at? o, at all events, thought Heine. Superior people ight wonder that a man with Heine's "intellect," t cetera, could put up, day after day, with a little ourgeoise like Mathilde. But Heine might easily ave retorted: "Where anywhere in the world re you going to find me a woman who is my equal, ho is my true mate? You will bring me cultivated overnesses, or titled ladies who preside over salons, r anæmic little literary women with their imitative erse or their amateurish political dreams. No, hank you. I am a man. I am a sick, sad man. I eed a kind, beautiful woman to love and take care f me. She must be beautiful, remember, as well kind—and she must be not merely a nurse, but woman I can love. If she shouldn't understand y writings, what does it matter? We don't arry a wife for that. I am not looking for some

little patronizing blue-stocking—who, in her heart thinks herself a better writer than myself—but for a simple woman of the elements, no more learned than a rose, and as meaningless, if you will, as the rising moon."

Just such a woman Heine found in his Mathilde and it is to be remembered that for years before the illness which left him, so to speak, at her mercy, he had loved and been faithful to her.

There are letters which seem to show that Mathilde had the defects of those qualities of buxom light-heartedness, of eternal sunshine, which had kept a fickle Heine so faithful. Sometimes one gathers, she as little realized the tragedy of Heine's suffering as she understood his writings. As such a woman must, she often left Heine very lonely; and seemed to feel more for her cat, or her parrot "Cocotte," than her immortal, dying husband.

"Oh, what a night we have had!" Heine exclaimed one day to his friend Meissner. "I have not been able to close an eye. We have had an accident in our house; the cat fell from the mantelpiece and scratched her right ear; it even bled a little. That gave us great sorrow. My good Mathilde remained up and applied cold poultices to the cat all night long. For *me* she never remains awake."

And another time, he said, even more bitterly to another friend: "I felt rather anxious yesterday. My wife had finished her toilet as early a

wo o'clock and had gone to take a drive. She romised to be back at four o'clock. It struck alf-past five and she had not got back yet. The lock struck eight and my anxiety increased. Iad she, perhaps, got tired of her sick husband, nd eloped with a cunning seducer ? In my painful oubt I sent the sick-nurse to her chamber to ee whether 'Cocotte' the parrot was still there. 'es, 'Cocotte' was still there. That set me at ease gain, and I began to breathe more freely. Without Cocotte' the dear woman would never go away."

A great man like Heine must necessarily have uch moods about a little woman like Mathilde; ut the important fact remains that for some wenty years Heine was Mathilde's faithful husband, nd that the commonplace, pretty, ignorant, leasure-loving, bourgeoise Mathilde was good and aithful to a crippled, incomprehensible mate. erhaps, after all, the wonder in this marriage is ven more on the side of Mathilde than of Heine. 'hink what such a woman must have had to forego, o suffer, to "put up with," with such a man—a man, emember, whose real significance must have been hinese to her. Surely, all of us who truly love ve by faith, and the love of Heine for Mathilde, nd of Mathilde for Heine, alike is only to be xplained by that mysterious explanation—faith.

That Heine understood his love for Mathilde o far as any man of genius can understand his love, nd was satisfied with it so far as any man of genius

can be with any love, we may be quite sure. His many letters about her, and to her, prove it. All the elemental simplicities of her nature—the very bourgeoise traits which made his friends wonder—alike interested him, and drew him closer toward her. When she weaves a rug for his friend Lewald how seriously he takes it! He could laugh at all things in heaven and earth, but when Mathilde weaves a rug for his friend he takes life seriously.

How "domestic" Heine could be is witnessed by a letter of his—to Mathilde from Hamburg in 1823—in regard to her buying a hat for his sister and another for his niece—giving careful directions as to style and price. Mathilde and he had then been each other's for over eight years, but none the less—nay, let us say all the more—he ended his letter "Adieu! I think only of thee, and I love thee like the madman that I am."

Perhaps the truest proof of Heine's love for Mathilde is the way in which, in his will, he flattered his despicable cousin, Carl Heine, for her sake, so that she might not suffer any loss of his inheritance. There is no doubt that Heine knew the worth of his Mathilde. If so terrible a critic of human nature was satisfied to love and live with her for so many years, we may be sure that Mathilde was a remarkable woman. She didn't indeed talk poetry and philosophy, like little "Mouche," but then the women who do that are legion; and Mathilde was one of those rare

women who are just women, and love they know not why.

In saying this, we mustn't forget that "Camille Selden" said it was ridiculous to sentimentalize about Mme. Heine. Yet, at the same time, we must remember Heine's point of view. When "Camille Selden" first sought his acquaintance, he had been living with Mathilde for some twenty years. Men of genius—and even ordinary men—are not apt to live with women they do not love for twenty years; and that Heine did perhaps the one wise thing of his life in marrying his Mathilde there can be very little doubt.

To a man such as Heine a woman is not so much a personality as a beautiful embodiment of the elements: "Earth, air, fire and water met together in a rose." If she is beautiful, he will waive "intellectual sympathy"; if she is good, he will not mind her forgetting the titles of his books. When she becomes a mother, he—being a man of genius—understands that she is a more wonderful being than he can ever hope to be.

Much has been said about the unhappy marriages of great writers. The true reason too often has been that they have married literary amateurs instead of women and wives. Heine was wiser. No one would, of course, pretend that Mathilde was his mate. But, then, what woman could have been? Certainly not that little literary prig he called his "Mouche."

VII

FERDINAND LASSALLE AND HELENE VON DÖNNIGES

THERE are two women whom I always think of as figures peculiarly tragic, and whom I often find myself thinking of together. They are both women with historic love stories, and love stories—here is the link of association between them—in which not only their own destinies were concerned, but great national issues disastrously involved. There was a moment, many years ago, when it really seemed possible that Ireland's long dream of freedom was about to come true. Parnell's patient strength had suddenly found a Titanic ally in Gladstone's tremendous moral prestige, and for a brief moment the issue hung tremulous in the scales of Time. It was a fateful moment in Ireland's history. It was her one desperate opportunity in a hundred years. How and why she lost it the world well knows.

The story of Ferdinand Lassalle and Helene von Dönniges is similarly the story of a "lost leader" and his great passion; and, if the fall of Parnell was the death-blow to Irish liberty, who shall say

what the great democratic movement throughout the world has lost by the tragically frivolous death of Lassalle? He, too, fell at one of those fortunate, fateful moments in the history of a great cause when the moment can only be seized by some magnetic, masterful leader, and if not so seized is lost, the advance that might have been made indefinitely postponed, and even the ground already won reconquered by reaction.

In remarking these tragic interferences of the passion of love in national destinies, it is, I hope, needless to say that none but narrow natures can feel bitterly toward the sad women so disastrously beloved, or hold the absurd doctrine that public men should keep themselves aloof from the inspiring passions of our common nature. I say "inspiring" advisedly, for whereas such stories as the one I have to retell illustrate the sheer malignity of ill-luck which sometimes attends the loves of even private, as well as public, persons, the instances are far more numerous where lives of great public usefulness have been throughout secretly nourished and inspired by the love that moves not only the sun and stars but even parliaments and field-guns.

Thus is a man created—to do all his work for some woman,
Do it for her, and her only, only to lay at her feet;
Yet in his talk to pretend, shyly and fiercely maintain it,
That all is for love of the work—toil just for love of the toil.
Yet was there never a battle, but side by side with the soldiers,
Stern like the serried corn, fluttered the souls of the women,

As in and out through the corn go the blue-eyed shapes of the flowers :
Yet was there never a strength but a woman's softness upheld it,
Never a Thebes of our dreams, but it rose to the music of woman—
Iron and steel it might stand, but the women had breathed on the building :
Yea, no man shall make or unmake, ere some woman hath made him a man.

One occasionally encounters in history a great career in which woman has played no such part, but the rule unquestionably is that the greater personalities of the world, whether they be statesmen, soldiers, artists, or even philosophers, have been exceptionally subject to the influence of woman. Of no famous man has this ever been truer than of Lassalle. Years before he met Helene von Dönniges he was as well known for his love affairs as his politics ; for, strikingly handsome and masterful, he possessed, too, just that dash and brilliancy which women find irresistible.

He was born on April 11, 1825, in Breslau, Prussia, of Jewish parents, and himself outwardly always professed the Jewish religion. His father, being a merchant, had destined him for a business career, but the son's inclinations were in other directions, and he went to the university instead. Philosophy and philology were the studies most attractive to him. From the university he went to Düsseldorf, and thence to Paris, where, at the age of nineteen, he made the acquaintance of Heine, who, with his customary insight, divined the force and significance of his nature, and, with

his customary aptness, found for him the appropriate phrase. He was born to die like a gladiator, he said, with a smile on his lips. A gladiator indeed he was, though it was hardly a gladiator's death a blundering destiny called upon him so ignominiously and wastefully to die. So impressed was Heine with the work he deemed Lassalle capable of doing, that he even hailed him as "The Messiah of the Nineteenth Century."

As Lassalle's public life ends with the name of a woman, so does it begin. From Paris Lassalle returned to Düsseldorf, and there made the acquaintance of a woman who was to be intimately associated with him continuously till his death. This was the Countess Hatzfeldt, a woman who was suffering at the hands of a brutal husband just such a wrong as was calculated to set Lassalle's chivalrous, combative nature on fire. Count Hatzfeldt, a dissolute nobleman of immense wealth, lived openly with his mistress, Baroness von Meyerdorf, at his castle near Düsseldorf ; and his Countess, who had left him, taking her two children with her, tried in vain to obtain a divorce and a suitable settlement for herself and the children. On becoming her friend, Lassalle took up the fight with characteristic energy—a fight which was to last nine years—and won it at last by his brilliant and patient advocacy. Meanwhile, Lassalle lived with the Countess in her Düsseldorf home, and one cannot wonder that the world had something

to say on the matter, for, though indeed the Countess was twice his age, a beautiful woman of thirty-eight might well be something more than a mother to a handsome young man of nineteen.

During these years Lassalle also threw himself vehemently into politics, becoming one of the leaders of the Social Democratic party, and undergoing a six-months' imprisonment for one of his daring speeches. At the conclusion of the Countess's case he was a marked man, and universally regarded as one of the most powerful and dangerous personalities in the Liberal camp. The Countess and he now left Düsseldorf, and settled in Berlin, where Lassalle speedily made a place for himself in the best intellectual society of the capital. Humboldt called him a "Wunderkind," and became his close friend; and Bismarck, though so opposed to his political theories, made no secret of his admiration for his great gifts, and of the interest he took in his conversation.

Although, as I have said, Lassalle was highly susceptible to the charms of women, none of his earlier love affairs seem to have taken any serious hold upon him. The women to whom he made love were aware that ambition held the first place in his heart, and he took care to make it clear that marriage did not enter into the scheme of his life.

One story goes, however, that some two years before he met Helene, the possible charm of the married state had been momentarily revealed to

him by a brief attachment to a young Russian lady named Sophie Solutzeff. But Sophie, it is said, while admiring Lassalle as a genius, was not drawn to him as a lover, and his own feeling for her being half-hearted, the relationship died a natural death. An acute critic of Lassalle's story Mr. Clement Shorter in his interesting introduction to Mr. George Meredith's "Tragic Comedians") throws discredit on this tale, coming as it does through Countess Hatzfeldt, who, as will be seen later, had her own reasons for wishing to show that the passion which proved fatal to Lassalle was no isolated experience in his life, but rather one of a number and of a nature to which his friends were so accustomed that they grew naturally to underrate their seriousness. Those friends, alas! from first to last were to play an unfortunate part in the tragedy—no doubt, after the manner of friends, with the best intentions. It was friends who, before Ferdinand Lassalle and Helene von Dönniges had met or even heard of each other, prepared them to fall into each other's arms by stimulating Helene's curiosity in a certain brilliant and dangerous "Lassalle." Why, they were so evidently born for each other! They must meet!

"Surely you know Lassalle?" said young Baron Korff to Helene at a ball, one evening in 1862. "Only a woman who knows him, and shares his opinions, can speak like that!"

But Helene apparently had never even heard the name of the man who was soon to mean so much in her life.

"Then I pity you both every hour that you remain apart, for you were made for each other," was Korff's prophetic reply.

Again, at a dinner-party, Dr. Karl Oldenberg had exclaimed: "You are the only woman I ever met who seems fitted to be Lassalle's wife!"

If only other friends of the two fated ones had realized their ordained affinity, their story might have been different; and what wonder, with such stimulating predictions in her mind, that Helene—practised coquette, too, as she already was—should have developed a mood of inflammatory expectancy for the moment when she did actually meet her man of destiny.

That fateful meeting at last took place at an evening party given by a friend, Frau Hirsemenzel, who was in Helene's confidence, and so dramatically instantaneous was their recognition of affinity that their fellow-guests were conscious of it, too, and remembered the electrical flash and suddenness of it years after.

"And this is how you look! This is you! Yes, yes, it is as I thought, and it is all right!" were Lassalle's first words, as he looked at her, even before they had been introduced to each other. Introduced! What need had they of introduction!

"What is the use?" Lassalle had added, laying his hand on her arm. "We know each other already. You know who I am; and you are 'Brünuehilde,' Adrienne Cardoville, the 'fox' Korff has told me about—in one word—Helene!"

Never was such a whirlwind wooing. Helene felt herself, as Meredith phrases it, "carried off on the back of a centaur." Each felt so absolutely and irrevocably each other's that formalities seemed silly. Lassalle spoke to Helene with the familiar "Du," as though they had been each other's for years, and when the party broke up at four in the morning, he carried her in his arms down the steps of the house,—and yet even to her chaperon, a lady quite demure and strict in her opinions, it all seemed the natural thing to do—as, of course, it was.

"It was rather bold and unusual," this lady had said afterward, "but if he had taken you by the hand, and walked off with you altogether, I should not have thought it strange; you seemed to belong to each other so entirely."

In fact, Lassalle and Helene had acted with the simplicity of a great feeling, and such simplicity always brings with it its own fitness, and, however astonishing, compels our respect, like any other masterful play of the elements.

Nature had thus manifestly joined these two people. It was now for man to put them asunder.

Lassalle was for immediately making formal

application for her hand, but Helene, with that vacillation which was to prove their ruin, begged him to wait. She was already aware of the probable attitude of her family toward Lassalle. When she had first heard his name, she had inquired about him of her grandmother, with whom she was living in Berlin, and had been told that he was a shameless demagogue, whom it would be impossible for her to know. Stories, too, about his relations with Countess Hatzfeldt had been brought to her; and how her father, a stern old aristocrat, high in the diplomatic service, would entertain the idea of an alliance with the Socialist Messiah she could surmise.

Besides, she was already half engaged to a young Wallachian prince, Yanko von Racowitza, a gentle lad, whom she treated much like a pet animal and called her "Moorish page." Yanko was the last of a long series of amourettes which had no doubt somewhat sapped her power of serious loving. He was an engaging companion, a fine musician, and her devoted slave, fetching and carrying for her, and obedient to her every whim. There is something appealingly pathetic about this young prince, and of all the secondary actors in the tragedy, now about to begin he is the only gracious, if piteous, figure.

Helene was nineteen and Lassalle thirty-eight when they first met. Their second meeting did not take place for some months. Meanwhile

Helene's family had "cut" the lady at whose house the first eventful meeting had taken place, and Lassalle had tried in vain to see her. Chance brought them together again at a concert in Berlin. Helene was then with Holthoff, the lawyer and his wife, old friends of her family, and friends, too, of Lassalle. The Holthoffs, therefore, played good angels to the lovers, and several times connived at their meeting, with the result that their first feeling for each other was confirmed and deepened. Still, Helene weakly kept up her relationship with Yanko, telling him, however, that if ever Lassalle should want her, she would break their engagement, and give up everything to go to him. Yanko docilely accepted the situation, saying she must do what was best for her own happiness. If the issue had been left to poor Yanko, our lovers would never have been tragic comedians.

But sterner and more selfish personalities than Helene's Moorish page were soon to be engaged on both sides, and even friends who wished their story well were to blunder on their behalf. Holthoff, surely with the best will in the world, had approached Helene's grandmother in Lassalle's interest. The grandmother had written to Herr von Dönniges, and from him had come an uncompromising refusal to consider Lassalle's offer under any circumstances. The idea of his daughter marrying one who was at once a Jew and a

"shameless demagogue" would naturally seem preposterous to him.

At this point of the story it is impossible not to feel a certain lull in the feelings of both lovers. For several months they were both within reach of each other in Berlin, and, though no doubt there were social difficulties in the way of their meeting, they do not seem to have been insuperable. Yet they never met, though they continued to hear of each other through the Holthoffs. When one remembers their first fiery meeting with all its wild vows, and then sees these months going by, with Helene apparently content with her life as a social butterfly, and Lassalle wholeheartedly absorbed in his political career, we cannot help wondering if the two were, after all, as much in love as they thought. For, when they really wished to meet, there seems to have been no trouble about arranging it, as before through the Holthoffs. Lassalle's sister, Frau von Friedland, was on a visit to Berlin, and desired to meet Helene, so Helene and she met, to their mutual liking, at the Holthoffs'.

Presently it was suggested that Helene should call Herr Holthoff from his library. On opening the door she found him there—with Lassalle.

From this interview we miss the splendid impatience of the night of the whirlwind wooing. A leisurely diplomacy had taken its place. It was March now—March, 1863. Helene had just

had a birthday, which Lassalle had remembered with violets and rosebuds and a poem. When the summer came, he was, as if accidentally, to make the acquaintance of Helene's parents, and rely on his conquering charm to win them round.

When the summer did come, Helene was busily nursing her grandmother, who remained ill all the rest of the year, and died early in the winter ; and, also in that summer, with that culpably frivolous vacillation which characterized her throughout, she had, strangely enough, formally betrothed herself to Yanko von Racowitza. After the grandmother's death, Helene returned with her mother to Geneva, where the family now lived, Herr von Dönniges having been appointed chargé d'affaires at Berne. In March, 1864, Yanko joined them, and, with his pleasant ways and various social accomplishments, won himself into the good graces of Herr von Dönniges and the whole family circle.

In May, Helene fell ill with a fever, and on her convalescence, still being weak and nervous, she was sent by her doctor to a mountain resort near Berne, where she lived with some English and American friends.

Meanwhile, Lassalle had been working like a giant, fighting lawsuits with which the government vainly attempted to paralyze his political activity, founding his great Working Men's Society, and making an almost regal campaign through the country, punctuated with daring speeches and

wild, popular enthusiasm. For one of these speeches he was sentenced to a year's imprisonment, which his brilliant appeal succeeded in reducing to six months. Pending his imprisonment, however, feeling the need of rest after the long strain upon his energies, he sought his favourite retreat, Rigi-Kaltbad, in Switzerland.

He had been there a few days, when, one afternoon—the afternoon of July 25, 1864—while he was busy on his correspondence with his political colleagues, a message was brought to him that a lady wished to see him. It was Helene. She had ridden up the mountain with her two lady friends having heard from the friendly Holthoff that Lassalle was staying there.

Lassalle proceeded with the party to Rigi-Kulm, where they were to spend the night and see the sunrise. But they were to be disappointed of their sunrise by a fog. "How often," Helene writes in her subsequent reminiscences, "when in later years I have stood upon the summit of Rigi and seen the day break in all its splendour, have I recalled this foggy, damp morning, and Lassalle's disappointment."

On this occasion they discussed their future more seriously than ever before, and, though Helene still pleaded for further compromise instead of an immediate marriage, which Lassalle strongly urged as their wisest course, she seemed on this occasion to have been braced by contact

vith his strong spirit into a mood of firmness vhich promised him loyalty against whatever pposition. They parted, elate and confident n the power of their love to win their battle.

At every stage of her journey, the post and the elegraph brought her fiery and tender messages rom her lover, and three days later Lassalle himelf followed her to Wabern. Meanwhile, she ad written him a passionate letter, in which she olemnly promised to become his wife, whatever ifficulties might stand in their way.

"You said to me yesterday: 'Say but a sensible nd decided "yes!"—*et je me charge du reste.*' Good: I say 'yes'—*chargez-vous donc du reste.* only require that we first do all in our power to vin my parents to a friendly attitude. To me elongs, however, a painful task. I must slay in old blood the true heart of Yanko von Racovitza, who has given me the purest love, the oblest devotion. With heartless egotism I must estroy the day-dream of a noble youth. But, or your sake, I will even do what is wrong."

For eight days Lassalle and Helene were at Vabern together—eight days of happy, uninerrupted companionship—in which, as they learnt nore and more of each other, every moment aught them how unerring had been their first vift sense of their instinctive affinity. In Helene assalle found that exquisitely matched wife of eart and brain, of spirit and sense, who is the

dream of every man of genius—a dream nc fulfilled once in a hundred years; and in Lassall Helene had found her "eagle of men," tha dominating, strong lord of her life, who was he dream, as he is the dream of every woman, bu of whose existence her girl's career of easy con quest had made her somewhat confidently sceptica Life seldom brings together two human beings s absolutely mated, so surely born for each other. I was elated with a very solemn sense of this unio that Helene and Lassalle bade each other good-by at Wabern station on the morning of August 1864. Helene was due at Geneva at two o'clock Lassalle was to follow by a later train. "Her end my happy memories," is Helene's sigh in he record of this time. Neither indeed could hav thought that before August had ended Lassall would have done with work and dreams, and tha the rooms of the Working Men's Society in Düssel dorf, as he had strangely prophesied, would b "hung in black."

Helene found her family in festival spirit and her mother in an unwonted mood of tender ness, owing to the recent betrothal of her siste Margarethe to Count Kayserling. Alas! this ra geniality not unnaturally prompted Helene t take a false step against which Lassalle ha specifically warned her. She confided in he seldom-softened mother—with the result tha as with the advent of some wicked fairy, all th

ıerriment suddenly fled with shrieking, and with orror-lifted hands. An alliance with that un-ɔeakable Jew, that shameless demagogue! Why, ıe mere thought of it was enough to frighten way the arduously captured count! How could ıe, abandoned girl, ruin her sister's prospects, nd smirch the social record of the whole family! 'he father, called to the rescue, made a terrifying :ene, heaped filthy slanders on Lassalle's name, nd forbade Helene to leave the house.

The battle had now begun in real earnest, and er father's violence finally awakened Helene to he radical impossibility of her dreams of peace-ble compromise. Lassalle was right. There vas only one way, and here Helene rose strongly o the situation, and acted with instant resolution nd courage. Lassalle was to have left Wabern or Geneva by a train starting a few hours later han Helene's, and on raising the storm at home, ut before her father's interference, she had im-ıediately despatched a letter by her maid to meet im on his arrival. Her father's treatment, how-ver, decided her to leave home instantly, and, nce for all, to unite her life with Lassalle's. lipping some money and a small dagger into er pocket, she managed to escape from the house nobserved, and arrived at Lassalle's hotel just s he was reading her letter. He received her ɔmewhat sternly, reproaching her for having isobeyed him by the confidence in her mother;

and, to her intense astonishment and disappoint ment, refused to go away with her, though h himself, during the days they had just spent to gether, had pleaded so forcibly for that ver course. He insisted that she should return hom and leave him to win her from her parents— feat which, with his sublime confidence in him self, he was sure of accomplishing. Helene, sti vibrating with the scene she had just gone through and too truly measuring the force of the resistanc to be encountered, endeavoured to convince Las salle of the utter hopelessness of his attempt, an besought him with tears to take advantage of th moment.

But, alas! Lassalle's fighting-blood was up and his haughty pride on its mettle. Arrogantl sure of his strength, fatally underestimating th task before him, he remained obdurate, and pre sently escorted Helene to the house of a lad who was not only Helene's own friend, but friend, too, of the family. They had hardly ar rived there when Helene's mother and sister als arrived. Lassalle declared the meeting most op portune, and immediately applied all his famou resources of persuasive eloquence to the situatio only to prove how right Helene's judgment ha been. Lassalle's usually victorious arts were no only utterly wasted on Frau von Dönniges, bu that lady assailed and insulted him in the mo violent and contemptuous fashion. Helene, th

ore than ever confirmed in her foresight, again egged him, in her mother's presence, to take er away with him, but alas! the gods had already ound his eyes for the stroke of his doom, and e paid no heed. Though Frau von Dönniges solently told him that, should he attempt to ll on her husband, the servants would throw m out of the house, and that, should he write, is letters would be returned unopened, he still aintained a pacificatory attitude of punctilious ourtesy, and still insisted on surrendering Helene o the care of such a mother, with a fanatical llantry which was no doubt very satisfying to is pride, but which was certainly most dis-trously ill-timed. Helene's eagle among men ad indeed made a very unaquiline mistake. Here, ever, was his moment to swoop and carry the hite lamb of the house of von Dönniges safe o his unscalable eyrie. But no! he chose instead o pose picturesquely in an attitude of nobly rrendering a prey which it was obviously in is power any moment to recapture. Nothing, ideed, would satisfy his aquiline pride but that he family which had dared thus to scorn him ould beg him upon its knees to do it the honour flying away with one of its daughters! The nage does indeed not unfairly represent the opelessness of the demands of his pride. There as to be a conflict of wills. His could not fail be the stronger.

"I give you back your child," said he magnificently to Frau von Dönniges. "Listen to me. I, who can do with your daughter what I wish, resign her to your care, but only for a short time. She goes with you because I wish her to; never forget that. And now, farewell!"

Then, turning to Helene, and tenderly embracing her, he said: "Farewell, for a little while. What you are doing for me now I will never forget. I can never thank you enough for your compliance. I require nothing more from you will, your strength. I know this is much to ask all the rest is my affair. Do not allow yourself to be maltreated; otherwise, submit to what is required of you. I shall know all that happens and on the slightest ill-treatment I will take you away at once: in any case, they shall not keep you long. Resign yourself for a short time to their will; mine is stronger; we shall conquer at last. And now, good-bye for a little while."

It was magnificent, but, indeed, it was not war and what Lassalle failed to see was that the pride which thus prompted him so desperately to hazard not only his own but also Helene's happiness was in its essence as bourgeois as the pride he was fighting, was indeed identical. All that he could hope to accomplish was the wresting of an empty formality from a society whose conventions both himself and Helene professed to despise, a sanction gained at the sword's point of which neither felt

ny need, an authority, in the opinion of both, bsolete and ridiculous. But such are the occasional aradoxes of the revolutionary.

Can we wonder if in Helene's eyes her eagle noulted some feathers for this unlooked-for action, nd that her love was set a-thinking? Could he eally love her and act so? And, if indeed he loved er, her brain told her that he had made a mistake at critical moment. Eagles among men should never nake mistakes. Possibly, too, her fine feminine ense found something underbred in this anxious ssertion of pride in a situation where a truer pride vould have disdained to measure itself with such vulgar standards. Some such half-formed thoughts nay well have worked in Helene's mind, and contributed to the slackening of a will all too susceptible o varying influences and changes of mood; and oon she was to be a prisoner, cut off from the piritual fount of her being, and instead daily and nourly breathing an atmosphere of her own doubts nd her father's lies.

Herr von Dönniges was an opponent whose bstinacy and resource Lassalle had not counted vith, and whose brutal and unscrupulous methods ne could not have been expected to conceive. An rdinarily severe parent Lassalle might well have onsidered himself a match for; but Herr von Dönniges was to display a barbarity, a ferocity, of lisapproval which one does not expect to encounter in a modern parent, however tyrannical,

and he at once set about the subjugation of his disobedient daughter in the thoroughgoing spirit of a mediæval baron. Lassalle had hardly left the house before this terrific parent appeared, hatless, so to speak, with rage, and with a large knife in his hand. Seizing Helene by the hair, he dragged her home, and locked her in her room, the window of which he nailed up with his own hand. Here she was kept close prisoner, her food was pushed in at the door, without her seeing who brought it, and her father threatened to shoot anyone who should hold communication with her, or act as go-between for her and Lassalle. At short intervals, he would come, and ask her decision, always receiving the answer: "I shall marry Lassalle."

Had Helene continued steadfast as she thus began, and opposed her father's bugaboo methods with quiet determination, the story could only have ended one way. Disquieting and even alarming as Herr von Dönniges' fury might be, her common sense might have told her that it was mainly stage thunder, and that there was really nothing to fear, so long as she and Lassalle remained true to each other.

After all, she was not really living in the Middle Ages, and her father knew quite well that he could only fulfil his threats at the risk of his public position. Here was Lassalle's point of vantage, and he lost no time in setting in motion the high forces

at his disposal—for, revolutionary though he was, he was not without powerful friends.

That he would have fulfilled his boast, and forced Herr von Dönniges to restore his daughter's freedom, there can be no doubt. Alas! it was Helene herself who had made his spirited tactics of no avail. Space does not permit of my following, step by step, the development of a struggle to which Herr von Dönniges presently brought not only violence but brilliant, unscrupulous cunning. On the side of the lovers it is a heartbreaking tragedy of errors and misunderstandings, complicated, too, with such cross-purposes as those of the Countess Hatzfeldt, whose jealousy of Helene is clearly seen to have been one of the cruel threads in the fatal web. Of course, the greatest danger of all in such a situation is that the lovers, cut off from direct communication, may lose faith in each other. At the best, love is a feeling childishly sensitive to doubts and fears. For the truest lovers separation is full of anxious disquiet. Time and Distance are evil fairies. They have been known to work sad mischief with the greatest passions. Who would dare answer for the love of another across say a year of separation and silence?

> "Canst thou be true across so many miles—
> So many days that keep us still apart?"

What lover would dare to answer the question to his own heart with an affirmative?

Had Helene but kept her lover's parting words in mind, and done nothing but sit firm in quiet determination, awaiting her certain deliverance, all would have been well; but, unfortunately, the fibres of her will all too soon relaxed; and, whatever she still felt in her heart, the threats of her father and the entreaties of her sisters presently had their way with her. Not only did she promise to give up Lassalle, but she set her name to letters to family friends announcing that determination, letters which her father had written for her to sign. She had pleaded intimidation as an excuse for this; but, even when the opportunity was given to her of free speech with one of Lassalle's most powerful ambassadors, Colonel Rüstow, and of transmitting through him a letter to Lassalle, she used it coldly to repudiate her lover. Herr von Dönniges, with the specious diplomacy which characterized his clever management of the affair at this stage, had sought an interview with Colonel Rüstow, for the purpose of convincing him that Helene was acting with her own free-will. Asked if Helene might receive and read for herself a letter from Lassalle, Herr von Dönniges promptly agreed, and Helene, entering the room, left it to read her letter. Soon she returned, and without a trace of emotion said to Colonel Rüstow as she handed him a note: "Tell Herr Lassalle that I have read his letter; but it makes no difference as regards the contents of the note I have just given you for him."

This was the note :

"HERR LASSALLE :—

"Having with all sincerity and with the deepest regret acknowledged my fault to my betrothed bridegroom, Yanko von Racowitza, and been comforted by his forgiveness and the assurance of his unchanged affection ; having also informed your friend Holthoff of my decision before receiving his letter advising me to give you up, I now declare to you, of my own free-will, that a union with you is not to be thought of, that I consider myself released from my engagement to you, and that I am determined to devote my future life to my betrothed husband in true and faithful love.

"HELENE VON DÖNNIGES."

Though this may well have shaken Lassalle's faith in Helene, he refused to believe that it was written of her own free-will—and, in fact, according to Helene's own statement later, the whole scene had been carefully planned by her father for the purpose of impressing Colonel Rüstow. He himself had dictated the letter, and made her promise that, in the event of Colonel Rüstow bringing a letter from Lassalle, she was to leave the room, give it unread into the hands of Yanko von Racowitza, and return, after a proper interval, with the previously prepared note. We cannot but feel that a nature so easily dominated was, after all, no true mate for Lassalle.

A similar scene a few days later, still more

diabolically conceived and callously acted, proved even too much for Lassalle's stubborn faith in her loyalty. Her letter had only moved him to fresh efforts. He had come so far as to win the assistance of the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Munich, who authorized an advocate, Doctor Haenle, to endeavour to arrange the affair amicably with Herr von Dönniges, and, if that proved impossible, to summon Helene before a notary to declare her decision in Lassalle's presence, and away from her father's influence. So little, for all her father's mediæval methods, was there any need for Helene to fear them. She had not only Lassalle, but the law on her side—and yet, will it be believed, she declined in the presence of Doctor Haenle and Colonel Rüstow the proffered chance of freedom. She would not go before a notary, and refused to meet Lassalle.

"What good would it do?" she said. "I know what he wants to say, and I am tired of the whole business."

In addition, she spoke with incredible levity of Lassalle: "Lassalle likes to talk; he would scarcely get through what he has to say in two hours"—and generally conducted the interview with such heartless frivolity that no wonder Lassalle's ambassadors went back to their friend, convinced that a woman who could talk so was utterly unworthy of him. And, certainly, though Helene was acting once more under intimidation, and, as she afterwards explained,

from a misunderstanding of Rüstow's and Haenle's relations to Lassalle (for her father kept her throughout ignorant of the chances in her favour, and she feared "false friends" of Lassalle among the dangers that surrounded her), yet it was surely unnecessary to play her part with such sincerity.

Can we wonder that Lassalle's faith in Helene was unequal to this cruel blow? At last he must agree with his friends. She was not worth the struggle.

"I have given up the affair," he telegraphed Richard Wagner, who had stood his friend throughout, "on account of the utter unworthiness of the person. But thanks for kind intentions. Do nothing more. Lassalle."

So he advised his other friends; and then, in his natural anger, he sent the following challenge to Helene's father:

"HERR VON DÖNNIGES:—

"Having learned through the report of Colonel Rüstow and Doctor Haenle that your daughter is a shameless hussy, and having therefore no intentions of dishonouring myself by marrying her, there is no longer any reason for withholding a demand for satisfaction on account of the various insults which you have offered me. I therefore request you to make the necessary arrangements for a duel with my two friends by whom I send this message.

"F. LASSALLE."

And it had been one of Lassalle's cardinal principles never, under any circumstances, to fight a duel! So had love enervated the strong thinker.

Herr von Dönniges refused to fight, and fled to Berne, but young Racowitza took on him to defend the family honour. Lassalle was known to be a fine shot, and Helene has since told us how she looked on Racowitza as already dead. She had already pictured his being carried to her home, and planned that in the confusion that would ensue she would steal out of the house—to Lassalle. Such was her weak and witless dependence on circumstances. But the issue was to be otherwise. At the first exchange of shots, Lassalle was fatally wounded; and he died two days later—August 31, 1864—aged thirty-nine years and five months. He is buried in the Jewish cemetery at Breslau, and on the head-stone is this short epitaph:

"Here rests what was mortal of
FERDINAND LASSALLE,
Thinker and Fighter."

So a weak woman and a tyrannical father had brought to nothing one of the strongest personalities and the most valuable intellects of the nineteenth century. So ended that stormy, starry wooing of that night in May; and surely there never was a story filled with more cruel reading, with so much pitiful matter of wantonly tangled complication, and, it would seem, easily avoidable tragic mistakes. Certainly no

story in the history of love more terribly illustrates the mad and criminal folly of arbitrary interference with that elemental instinct of human hearts. For not even Herr von Dönniges achieved his end. The disgrace he feared came upon him tenfold. His daughter left him. Racowitza died a year or two after—though Helene had once more illustrated her curious nature by becoming his wife. The Countess Hatzfeldt was heartbroken. Not a single actor in the story was happy—and all because society, in the person of Herr von Dönniges, wickedly, cruelly insisted on putting asunder two whom Nature had so manifestly joined together.

Such is the revenge of a thwarted natural force —and such is the lesson society seems eternally incapable of learning.

VIII

ABÉLARD AND HÉLOÏSE

"THERE lived in Paris a young girl named Héloïse." So Abélard in his autobiographical letter to an unknown, and possibly hypothetical, friend tells in one sentence, more eloquent even than his wonted eloquence of the schools, a whole history. He wrote in Latin, but it sounds prettier in his own language, as most things are apt to sound in French : "*Il existait à Paris une jeune fille nommée Héloïse.*" Ah me ! what long-lost joy, what ancient heart-break, are contained in that simple statement.

Yet all would have been well—or not so well ! —if there had not also lived in Paris at the same time a certain brilliant teacher of philosophy named Peter Abélard.

The year was 1118, and Abélard not only lived in Paris, but in a real sense may almost be said to have been one of its makers. As the walls of Thebes rose to music, Paris builded itself to the music of Abélard's tongue : for on his lips, indeed, of all men, philosophy was not

> "Harsh and crabbèd, as dull fools suppose,
> But musical as in Apollo's lute."

Think of the wonder of the teacher on the one hand, and the wonder of the student thirst for knowledge on the other, that between them could build a city—all out of enchanting speech and enchanted hearing. For Paris literally began that way. So many scholars flocked from all parts of Europe to listen to that nightingale of knowledge, that Paris, a mere embryo city when Abélard first came there, had to grow bigger and bigger to hold them. It seems fitting that our modern Alexandria should have been made out of learning and a love story.

Abélard was a young nobleman from Pallet in Brittany, of an old family, and with much confidence in himself. Though the eldest son of his father, a man of considerable culture for his day, he early chose for himself the wandering pilgrimage of the scholar rather than that military way of life most affected by young men of his class. Wherever the reputation of some famous teacher drew him, he rambled, and of all his teachers, Jean Roscelin, Canon of Compiègne, was probably the earliest, as he was certainly the most influential. From him it may well be that Abélard's natural bent towards taking the common-sense rationalistic view of the hair-splitting scholastic controversies of his day gained strength and direction; for Roscelin was a well-known champion of freedom of thought, and looked upon as anything but sound on the question of the Trinity.

With a rationalistic temper of mind thus already well-informed, Abélard at length arrived in Paris, and put himself under the teaching of a scholar of a very different type, the famous William of Champeaux, a brilliant pillar of orthodoxy. A certain philosophic controversy of supreme importance then, of supreme unimportance now, was agitating the learned world. We needn't pause even to state what it was. All that concerns us is that William of Champeaux championed the orthodox, logic-chopping side of the controversy, and that Abélard, by a sudden flash of his radiant common sense, won such a victory for the other side that the authority of his teacher was disastrously impaired, and his own reputation as a daring thinker and subtle dialectician made with a single blow.

Abélard's success decided him to open a school of his own, and at Melun, some thirty miles from Paris, and presently at Corbeil, he began to draw the world of wandering scholars to his chair. Suddenly his health gave way, and seven years of exile in his country home followed. Meanwhile William of Champeaux had delegated his chair to a substitute, and himself retired into the priory of St. Victor. In his retirement, however, he gave lectures on rhetoric, which Abélard, on his return to Paris, cynically attended—to the further discomfiture of the teacher. So the battle between the rival teachers went on. With its details we need not here concern ourselves. Suffice it that, at

length, in the year 1118, after various twists and turns of the scholastic conflict, Abélard found himself firmly seated in William of Champeaux's long-coveted chair of the Episcopal school, under the shadow of Notre Dame. Soon there were some five thousand students, a motley picturesque crowd indeed, thronging Paris just to hear Abélard talk. "It has been estimated," says his most recent and most luminous biographer, "that a pope, nineteen cardinals, and more than fifty archbishops and bishops were at one time among his pupils." The handsome, brilliant, and somewhat worldly young teacher was the idol of the city, and Héloïse, in a passage of her letters pathetic with womanly worship, recalls how the women used to run to see him as he passed from his lodging on the hill of Ste. Geneviève (now the Latin Quarter and the scene of the greatest of his earlier triumphs) to the schools. "Who was there," she cries, "that did not hasten to observe when you went abroad, and did not follow you with strained neck and staring eyes as you passed along? What wife, what virgin, did not burn? What queen or noble dame did not envy my fortune?"

In 1118 Abélard was in his thirty-ninth year, and at the height of his fame. The intoxication of fulfilled ambition and personal popularity was his daily and hourly drink. Wealth as well as fame was his, but so far he had not known love.

Now Abélard, by rumour of her rare gifts and

graces, and unusual accomplishments of learning had by this time become aware that *il existait à Paris une jeune fille nommée Héloïse*, and, by his own confession, he presently set himself to win her love. Héloïse lived with her "uncle"—gossip tongues said her father—Fulbert, a canon of Paris. Abélard found himself in need of a new lodging, and Fulbert was glad to welcome so distinguished a boarder. It is not difficult to imagine the excitement in the heart of Héloïse. For it had been arranged that Abélard should partly repay Fulbert for his hospitality by giving various learned lessons to his niece—Héloïse was but seventeen or eighteen—so much a child (though, indeed, she had been brought up by the somewhat worldly nuns of Argenteuil—a fact not to be forgotten in Abélard's defence) that her guardian gave Abélard permission to chastise her if she neglected her lessons!

Neither seem to have entirely neglected their lessons, for it is probable that Héloïse's knowledge of Greek and Hebrew came from Abélard, who also instructed her in theology and dialectics. But soon as with Paolo and Francesca, the books were forgotten, and Abélard confesses that before long there were "more kisses than theses," and that "love was the inspirer of his tongue." Yet, if the books were temporarily forgotten, they were not merely "love's purveyors," for this love of Abélard and Héloïse was one of those rare loves in which the rapture of union is not merely in the heart

but in the brain. Each could say to the other, as Robert Browning wrote to Elizabeth Browning—"Where the heart is, let the brain lie also." Theirs was that keen, complete love which unites the spirit and the senses and the intellect in an ecstasy which no tongue, not even Abélard's, can tell.

But, if Abélard did not entirely neglect the mental training of his beloved pupil, she was soon the only pupil to whom he paid any regard: too soon his love for her so completely possessed him that he half forgot his lecture room and the five thousand pilgrim scholars, and, when he did lecture, lectured in a weary, unprepared fashion very unlike the old spirited way which had won him his fame. But, if his lectures were disappointing, there were soon love songs of his making on all the singing lips of Paris; and every one knew what and who it was that had wrought this change in the master. Every one, for a long time, except—Fulbert; and then at last Fulbert too. With Fulbert's discovery of the attachment, Abélard and Héloïse ceased to live under the same roof. The happy lessons violently ceased, and the lovers might only meet rarely and with difficulty. As usual, however, the guardian had made his discovery too late, and there came a day when Héloïse realized that she was soon to become a mother, and wrote telling Abélard the wonderful news—"with transports of joy." It is necessary to emphasize Héloïse's attitude in presence of a contingency

which most women would naturally, and necessarily, regard as tragic, as it is characteristic of her part—so much the nobler part—in the whole story. What was she to do ? she asked. Abélard's answer was to take her one night, during Fulbert's absence, to his home at Pallet, where, under his sister's care, she, in due course, gave birth to a boy, to whom the parents gave the name of "Astrolabe"—a name which bears curious witness to that love of learning which had meant so much in bringing them together.

Fulbert's rage at these circumstances may be judged too well from his subsequent action. To appease it Abélard at length proposed marriage with Héloïse, though it is impossible to say that the form of his proposal, as reported by himself, raises him in one's esteem. He had done nothing, he urged, that need surprise anyone who understood the violence of love and knew into what abysses, since the beginning of the world, women had hurled the greatest of men !

Remembering his own earlier statement that he had deliberately sought the love of Héloïse, he was hardly in a position to make this oldest and meanest of all masculine pleas—the woman tempted me ! Still, he was willing to make a reparation which, he quaintly says, went beyond anything Fulbert could have hoped ! He would marry Héloïse—on condition that the marriage was kept a secret. For, you see, Héloïse knew but one love—the love

of Abélard ; Abélard loved two, and I fear that for him Ambition was the greater of the two. Think of a man who loved a woman considering, at such a crisis of their lives, and at a moment when even an evident duty might be expected to appear attractive —think of him coldly thinking of his " reputation." " I proposed to him," says he, to " marry her whom I had seduced, on the sole condition that the marriage was to be kept secret, so that it should not injure my reputation ! "

If, as I have said before, the love of Dante and Beatrice was entirely the love of Dante, it is surely equally certain that the love of Abélard and Héloïse was mainly the love of Héloïse. It is a humiliating comment on Abélard to hear how differently Héloïse took the situation. With all her womanly eloquence, backed by no end of learned authority, she pleaded with him—not to marry her ! What odium the marriage would bring upon the Church. What tears it would cost philosophy ! Think, too, how deplorable for a man whom nature had created for the whole world thus to be enslaved by a woman and bent under a dishonourable yoke !

Reasoning all too much after Abélard's own heart !—but all the same the marriage really took place. Leaving little Astrolabe with Abélard's sister at Pallet, the two lovers returned to Paris, and, after a night of vigil in a church, were married, on a certain dawn, in presence of Fulbert and many friends of both parties. At the church door they

separated, Abélard going his way, Héloïse hers. For the world was not to know! However, according to Abélard, Fulbert was determined that it should—and can we blame him!—and, in consequence of his various loud whispers, Abélard had Héloïse secretly conveyed to her old convent of Argenteuil, near Paris, where, without taking the veil, she was to live the life of a nun.

This act of Abélard's was misunderstood, wilfully maybe, by Fulbert, who professed to regard it as a first step to Abélard's annulment of the marriage, in the interests of his ecclesiastical ambitions—for this natural enemy of priests and priestly sophistry appears really to have had his heart set upon Church preferment, after all. Acting on this, possible, misconception, Fulbert took his terrible historic revenge upon Abélard; and Abélard and Héloïse saw each other no more for many years. Beside himself with rage and shame, it was not unnatural that Abélard—selfish as it actually was of him—should command Héloïse to consummate her uncompleted vows, and take the veil in earnest. This she did, her warm human heart protesting, as it still remained warm enough to protest after years of monastic life, and, who can doubt that reads her wonderful letters, protested to the end.

Abélard's life in the long interval belongs rather to the literature of theology than to the literature of love. Though the rich human spring in him which had given that worldly charm to his lectures,

and turned a philosopher into a troubadour, was for ever dried up; and though, indeed, he was soon to wither to an asceticism which regarded his love for Héloïse as a sinful lust of the flesh, yet his head retained enough of its vital originality to keep him still and always a pioneer of honest thinking, and, therefore, a rebel in the eyes of the Church. To-day Abélard's heresies have become a part of official Christian doctrines, as is the way with any heresies whatsoever; but several centuries have gone by in the interval, and the way of the honest thinker is easier to-day—if he is careful to choose his subjects! Though Abélard grew more and more of an ascetic moralist, he does not appear to have lost his courage as a masculine thinker, and, as long as he lived, he was ever ready to take the perilous chances of truth. This, necessarily, made his life eventful, and even stormy, for the next few years, and finally drove him into a sort of exile, resulting in the foundation of that lonely little monastery, in the valley of Arduzon, the name of which, the Paraclete, is so consecrated to romance. Once more the old miracle of his silver speech took place. Distant and almost uninhabitable as was the valley where, with a brother or two, he had taken up his exile, though, as he tells us, you had to build your rough cabin for yourself, and had to be content with moss and mud to lie on, and the grassy bank to eat from, still the pilgrim audience somehow found its way, as inevitably the sleuth-hounds of heresy found theirs

also. For there is no spot on the earth, however lonely, where it is absolutely safe to tell the truth. It was that popular and industrious St. Bernard of Clairvaux that this time made things uncomfortable for Abélard; and with that usual luck of his, which seemed to make every change in his life for the worse, Abélard accepted an invitation to preside over the Abbey of St. Gildas at Rhuys in Brittany. The Abbey of St. Gildas was rich and worldly, and it is more than likely that the good monks had been attracted to Abélard rather by the heterodoxy of his reputation than by his piety. Their disappointment was to be keen and bitter, for how different was this austere, atrophied Abélard from the gay monk of the world they had looked forward to see. Nor were they long in expressing their disappointment. Soon they were violently to oppose his authority and even to drop poison into his food.

Abélard had been abbot of St. Gildas but three or four years when news came to him that Héloïse was in trouble too. The nuns of Argenteuil of which monastery she had been prioress, had been turned out of their home, owing more to the ecclesiastical avarice of the Abbot Suger of St. Denis—who fished up an old document to prove that Argenteuil really belonged to the monastery of St. Denis—than to the probably exaggerated accounts of the worldliness of the nuns. On hearing this news, Abélard transferred the

Paraclete, still his property, into Héloïse's keeping, and, within a year or two, the nunnery thus founded became one of the most famous in the kingdom, respected, and, as we would say, fashionable. The goodness and high-mindedness of Héloïse are as apparent in her success as is her charm. Nobles and prelates smiled gifts upon her little abbey, and noble ladies anxious to take the veil thought first of the Paraclete. Well might a world-weary, perhaps love-thwarted, girl seek out such a spiritual mother; for, good and pure and spiritual as Héloïse was, her letters tell us that the spring of an undying love still kept her nature sweet and sympathetic to the human needs.

A young monk seeking Abélard would indeed have made no such happy choice of spiritual director. Ask the monks of St. Gildas! These perhaps over-human fathers seem at length to have so violently resisted Abélard's stern purpose to reform them, as to have driven him from the Abbey in very fear for his life; though it must not be forgotten that in the midst of all these various "calamities," of which presently he was so feelingly to write, Abélard still remained Abbot of St. Gildas, and enjoyed an abbot's revenue. The monks, however, found it possible still to make his life a burden, and his calumniators were not slow to take their side against him. One day, sick at heart, and apparently anxious to tell his own truth about himself, Abélard sat down and

wrote to an unknown friend "The Story of my Calamities," a document of the first importance to our understanding of his nature, but more important still, because, accidentally being read by Héloïse in her quiet nunnery, it prompted her to write the first of her beautiful heartfelt letters: "To her lord, yea, father; to her spouse, yea, brother; from his servant, yea, daughter—his wife, his sister; to Abélard from Héloïse." His spiritual daughters, the good sisters of the Paraclete —"they who have given themselves to God in the person of her who has given herself exclusively to thee"—were alarmed to hear such news of him, and begged that he would write to ease their anxious hearts. "A letter would cost thee so little," cried Héloïse reproachfully, and quotes Seneca on the epistolary duties of friends.

In the interval between Abélard's making over the Paraclete to Héloïse, and the writing of "The Story of my Calamities," he had paid many visits to her abbey, very strictly in the character of her spiritual patron and director. The tongues of the world wagged over these visits, but we have only to read Abélard's "dusty answers" to Héloïse's letters to realize that the world was all too wrong. The Abélard that had taught Héloïse her Greek and Hebrew, and floated love-songs through the lattice to the ears of an eaves-dropping Paris, was dead. He was now a serious doctor of divinity, with a strong leaning towards asceticism. The old warm-blooded

ngel-eyed dream that Héloïse could still write of
ith stirring bosom, after so many years, and still
egard—for all her ecclesiastical dignity—as the
rown of her woman's life, was for poor Abélard
folly and a foulness. To her burning words he
nswered with dry counsels of perfection—in
etters which, from the human point of view, are
he most pitiful things in literature.

But, on the other hand, where in literature
as a woman so daringly laid bare her heart with
o splendid and so pure a shamelessness! When we
onsider, too, the time in which she lived, all the
isabilities under which a woman eager to "utter all
erself upon the air" must have laboured, the
ourage of such an emotional sincerity constitutes
n achievement before which Abélard's intellectual
udacities seem mere college triumphs. Ah, listen
ow this twelfth century abbess dared to love:

". . . All your wishes I have blindly fulfilled,
ven to the point that, not being able to bring
nyself to offer you the least resistance, I have
ad the courage, on a word from you, to lose
nyself. I have done still more: ah!—strange
ndeed—my love has turned to such madness
hat it has sacrificed, without hope of ever re-
overing it, that which was the one object of its
esire; at your command, I have, with a new
abit, taken another heart, just to show you that
ou are as much the only master of my heart as
f my body. Never, God is my witness, have I

ever sought from you anything but just yourself; it is you only, and not your possessions, that I love. I have never given a thought either to any questions of marriage or marriage dower, or indeed to any joys or wishes of my own. It has been yours alone, as you well know, that I have had at heart. Although the name of wife appears more sacred and more binding, I myself would have liked better the name of mistress, or even—let us say it—that of concubine or courtesan: in the thought that the more I humbled myself for you, the more I should win the right to your good graces, and the less impaired the glorious renown of your genius.

"You yourself in writing that letter of consolation to a friend have not entirely forgotten these sentiments of mine. You have not disdained to recall some of those reasons for which I did my best to dissuade you from our fatal marriage, but you have passed over in silence almost all those which made me prefer love to marriage, liberty to a chain. I take God to witness that if Augustus, master of the world, had deemed me worthy of the honour of his alliance, and assured me of the Empire of the universe for ever, the name of courtesan with thee would have seemed sweeter and nobler than the name of empress with him; for it is not riches, not power, that makes greatness; riches and power are things of fortune; greatness depends upon merit."

Abélard has his place in the history of philosophy, but his name would hardly have attained its familiarity on the lips of men, had it not been for his love story, and the real love in the story was that of Héloïse. For such a love the history of love has but few parallels, and what picture could be more dramatically poignant than that with which the story closes. At last, all his battles fought, Abélard came to die, and Héloïse, by connivance of a friendly abbot, contrived that his body should be brought in secret to the Paraclete. The Abbot of Cluny deserves well of romance for that good deed. Héloïse survived Abélard twenty-one years, and much of that time she must have watched over his sleep in that quiet chapel in the lonely valley of Arduzon. Surely no love story in the world has a more touching end than this, an end more picturesque in its pathos. As time passed, that vigil must have grown less and less the vigil of a wife's heartbreak, and more and more the vigil of a mother over the sleep of her tired child. For a woman's love is always a mother's love—most of all, perhaps, the love for her husband.

A pretty story tells that when Héloïse died she was buried in the same tomb as her husband, and that the dead man opened wide his arms to receive her. Certain it seems that the ashes of the two lovers were, at one time or another, mingled, and that Abélard and Héloïse now rest together in Père La Chaise.

IX

ROBERT BROWNING AND ELIZABETH BARRETT

IN addition to its own intrinsic beauty and completeness, its perfection as an achievement in human happiness, the love story of the Brownings brings us the minor, but real, satisfaction of seeing love once again triumphantly demolishing one more platitude of so-called worldly wisdom—the matrimonial incompatibility of artistic temperaments, and, above all, of literary persons. Once again, the wisdom of this world is shown to be foolishness with love. The idea of two poets living together in harmony, and making a shining success of their marriage, has been immemorially regarded as an impossibility in nature. One poet in a household is popularly considered as a sufficient trial of human nerves, but two under the same nuptial roof would seem to be merely a theme for the Comic Muse. Even Wordsworth turns humorist at the thought. "So Robert Browning and Miss Barrett have gone off together," he said when the news of their marriage, with which all literary London of 1846 was humming, came to

im, " I hope they understand each other—nobody lse would." And even an intimate friend and onfidant, Mrs. Jameson, has her doubts and fears. I have here," she wrote from Paris to a friend, a poet and a poetess—two celebrities who have un away and married under circumstances pecu- arly interesting, and such as to render imprudence —the height of prudence. Both excellent; but God help them! for I know not how the two poet eads and poet hearts will get on through this rosaic world."

We need not trouble ourselves further with this eneral preconception as to the incompatibility of oets, except to say that it seems to be a part of he absurd, widespread notion that two of a trade nake bad companions, so that similarity of tempera- nents and community of tasks are to be avoided ather than sought in marriage. Such is the wild onsense that passes from lip to lip as proverbial visdom. Far from being surprised that two poets hould make a success of it, one might surmise that he union of two whose very business is with beauty nd love and the things of the spirit would be on hat very account the more sensitively complete; nd that, even in the marriages of those who are not oets, it is the poetic element in them which is their itality, which, in fact, makes them marriages at all.

But the Brownings were not merely poets—they vere such learned poets as well. In spite of the xamples of Abélard and Héloïse, of Pericles and

Aspasia, Greek scholarship and the simple emotions are not popularly supposed to go together, and, at first sight, the loves of learned persons are apt to be associated with "the loves of the triangles." It is not commonly realized that one may be all the more human for being learned, and that love itself, for that very reason, be thus the better furnished with the varied material of mutual sympathy and expression. "Where the heart lies, let the brain lie also." Love is likely to be all the fuller when two can enjoy Æschylus together, and even Greek itself, as the Browning letters most humanly prove to us, may become one of love's playthings. Nor, I presume, can it be a disadvantage for love to be able to declare itself after the manner of "Sonnets from the Portuguese."

Great love-poetry is usually a lonely, one-sided thing. Most often it is the ideal utterance of ideal feelings, feelings directed towards an imaginary, or an unattainable, or an unresponsive object, the voice of unrequited passion; or it is a purely dramatic utterance—such as that of Romeo and Juliet—the ideal converse of ideal beings. So, we say, men and women make love in poetry or in novels; but in real life, love must be satisfied with a more homespun expression. Now herein is the romantic thrill and satisfaction of the loves of the Brownings. Here are two modern Londoners simply and, so to say, prosaically in love, like other ordinary human beings, but whose natural way of

elling each other happens to be—great poetry. The unlettered heart must have recourse to ready-made poetry to express its inexpressible—poets are born to this end, to serve as the mouthpieces of lovers—but here we have two lovers who instinctively express themselves in masterpieces, two royal natures making love royally, in the speech of gods, in the language of angels. Here we have great poetry not merely as unrelated expression, for the use of this or that according to his needs, but great poetry springing from the hearts of two great poets as the natural means of communication between them—when we read :

"How do I love thee? Let me count the ways—"

or read :

"God be thanked, the meanest of his creatures
Boasts two soul sides, one to face the world with,
One to show a woman when he loves her!"

We are not only reading great poetry with its universal message and application, we are also reading the actual words which an actual woman and an actual man created and employed for the use of their own private hearts. Not Romeo and Juliet at a moonlit window in Verona, but Elizabeth Barrett, living at 50 Wimpole Street, London, in the year 1845, and Robert Browning, living at New Cross, Hatcham, Surrey, in the same year. Surely the poetry thus gains an added thrill for us, as we realize its first employment by two flesh-and-blood human beings of our own time.

Appropriately, though indeed involuntarily enough, it was a poem of Elizabeth Barrett's own that began the whole beautiful story. In 1844 she had followed up her first success of "The Serapion" volume by the publication of two volumes of "Poems" containing work such as "A Drama of Exile," "The Cry of the Children," "The Rhyme of the Duchess May," "The Lay of the Brown Rosary," "A Vision of Poets," and "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," which had given her an immediate wide popularity. Robert Browning had admired these poems, as Miss Barrett had admired his "Paracelsus," and that series of masterpieces which in 1841 he had published in cheap and actual serial form under the symbolic title of "Bells and Pomegranates"—"Pippa Passes" being included amongst them. A mutual friend of the two poets, John Kenyon, a school-fellow of Browning's father, and a kinsman of Miss Barrett, who afterwards referred to him as her "fairy Godfather," had urged Browning to write to her of his appreciation, an appreciation including, one cannot but surmise, some personal gratification in this verse, which must have pulled him up with a pleased start as he read "Lady Geraldine's Courtship":

"Or at times a modern volume, Wordsworth's solemn-thoughted idyl,
Howitt's ballad-verse, or Tennyson's enchanted reverie—
Or from Browning some 'Pomegranate,' which, if cut deep down the middle,
Shows a heart within blood-tinctured, of a veined humanity."

Browning took his friend's advice and on January 11, 1845, mailed this whole-hearted letter :

" New Cross, Hatcham, Surrey.
(Post-mark, *January* 10, 1845.)

" I love your verses with all my heart, dear Miss Barrett—and this is no off-hand complimentary letter that I shall write—whatever else, no prompt matter-of-course recognition of your genius, and here a natural and graceful end of the thing. Since the day last week when I first read your poems, I quite laugh to remember how I have been turning and turning again in my mind what I should be able to tell you of their effect upon me, for in the first flush of delight I thought I would this once get out of my habit of purely passive enjoyment when I do really enjoy, and thoroughly justify my admiration —perhaps even, as a loyal fellow-craftsman should, try and find fault and do you some little good to be proud of hereafter !—but nothing comes of it all—so into me has it gone, and part of me has it become, this great living poetry of yours, not a flower of which but took root and grew—oh, how different that is from lying to be dried and pressed flat, and prized highly, and put in a book with a proper account at top and bottom, and shut up and put away . . . and the book called a 'Flora' besides ! After all, I need not give up the thought of doing that, too, in time ; because even now, talking with whoever is worthy, I can give a reason for my faith in one and another excellence, the fresh strange music, the affluent language, the exquisite pathos, and true new brave thought ; but

in thus addressing myself to you—your own self, and for the first time, my feeling rises altogether. I do, as I say, love these books with all my heart—and I love you too. Do you know I was once not very far from seeing—really seeing you? Mr. Kenyon said to me one morning, 'Would you like to see Miss Barrett?' Then he went to announce me—then he returned . . . you were too unwell, and now it is years ago, and I feel as at some untoward passage in my travels, as if I had been close, so close, to some world's wonder in chapel or crypt, only a screen to push and I might have entered, but there was some slight, so it now seems, slight and just sufficient bar to admission, and the half-opened door shut, and I went home my thousands of miles, and the sight was never to be!

"Well, these Poems were to be, and this true thankful joy and pride with which I feel myself,

"Yours ever faithfully,

"ROBERT BROWNING.

MISS BARRETT,
50 Wimpole St.
R. BROWNING."

Miss Barrett answered this letter, by return mail, but, before we quote her answer, we are able to take a glimpse behind the scenes at the delightfully girlish excitement and heart-flutter which it brought into her invalid solitude. "I had a letter," we find her writing to her close friend, Mr. Martin, "from Browning the poet last night, which threw me into ecstasies—Browning, the author of 'Paracelsus,' and king of the mystics." And to her friend Miss

Mitford she had even confided the clause "and I love you too," as she confesses to Browning, a year and a half after, when they had long been affianced to each other, and could look back, after the manner of lovers, with a tender retrospective curiosity at love's beginning, before it knew itself for love. Browning had written: "Do you remember that the first word I ever wrote to you was, 'I love you, dear Miss Barrett'? It was so—could not but be so—and I always loved you, as I shall always." "Do I remember? Yes, indeed, I remember," was the answer. "How I recurred and wondered afterwards, though at the moment it seemed very simple and what was to be met within our philosophy every day. But there, you see, there's the danger of using *mala verba!* The Fates catch them up and knit them into the web!" Then she goes on to tell of that early "imprudence." "I was writing to Miss Mitford and of you," she says, "we differed about you often . . . because she did not appreciate you properly, and was fond of dwelling on the 'obscurity' when I talked of the light—and I, just then writing of you, added in my headlong, unreflecting way that I had had a real letter from you which said that you loved me—— 'Oh—but,' I wrote on, 'you are not to mistake this, not to repeat it—for, of course, it is simply the 'purest of philanthropies' . . . some words to that effect—and if yours was the purest of philanthropies, mine was the purest of innocences, as you may well

believe . . . for if I had had the shadow of a fore-sight, I should not have fallen into the snare. So vexed I was afterwards! Not that she thought any-thing at the time, or has referred to it since, or remembers a word now. Only I was vexed in my innermost heart . . . and *am* . . . do you know i . . . that I should have spoken lightly of such an expression of yours—though you meant it lightly too, dearest! It was a disguised angel, and I should have known it by its wings though they did not fly."

So she could write out of the fullness of know-ledge in June, 1846, and thus we are able to read the letter which she sent on January 11, 1845 smiling to ourselves in knowing what "Mr. Brown-ing" naturally could not know and how much more feeling went with it than either was conscious of.

"I thank you, dear Mr. Browning," the letter begins, "from the bottom of my heart. You meant to give me pleasure by your letter—and even if the object had not been answered, I ought still to thank you. But it is thoroughly answered. Such a letter from such a hand! sympathy is dear—very dear to me: but the sympathy of a poet, and of such a poet, is the quintessence of sympathy to me! . . . For the rest you draw me on with your kindness. It is difficult to get rid of people when you once have given them too much pleasure—*that* is a fact and we will not stop for the moral of it. What I was going to say—after a little natural hesitation—

is, that if ever you emerge without inconvenient effort from your 'passive state,' and will *tell* me of such faults as rise to the surface and strike you as important in my poems . . . you will confer a lasting obligation on me, and one which I shall value so much, that I covet it at a distance. I do not pretend to any extraordinary meekness under criticism and it is possible enough that I might not be altogether obedient to yours."

More of this, and then, with the womanly playfulness which is the charm of all her letters, she takes teasing advantage of that perhaps not over fortunate image of "the crypt."

"Is it indeed true that I was so near to the pleasure and honour of making your acquaintance? And can it be true that you look back upon the lost opportunity with any regret? *But*—you know—if you had entered the 'crypt,' you might have caught cold, or been tired to death, and *wished* yourself 'a thousand miles off'; which would have been worse than travelling then. It is not my interest, however, to put each thought in your head about its being 'all for the best'; and I could rather hope (as I do) that what I lost by one chance I may recover by some future one. Winter shuts me up as they do dormouse's eyes; in the spring, *we shall see;* and I am so much better that I seem to be turning round to the outward world again. And in the meantime I have learnt to know your voice, not merely from the poetry, but from the

kindness in it. Mr. Kenyon often speaks of you—dear Mr. Kenyon!—I am writing too much—and notwithstanding that I am writing too much, I will write of one thing more. I will say that I am your debtor, not only for this cordial letter and for all the pleasure which came with it, but in other ways, and those the highest; and I will say that while I love to follow this divine art of poetry, in proportion to my love for it and my devotion to it, I must be a devout admirer and student of your works. This is in my heart to say to you—and I say it.

"And, for the rest, I am proud to remain,

"Yours obliged and faithful,

"ELIZABETH B. BARRETT."

So began a correspondence which was thenceforth carried on copiously, even voluminously, and with increasing intimacy, hardly a day missed, for nearly two years, till the day came which made letters no longer necessary, that September 12, 1846, on which the two correspondents became husband and wife in Marylebone Church, a gloomy sanctuary thus transformed into a shrine to which in after-years Robert Browning was frequently a votive pilgrim. But this happy consummation had not come about without much travail and searching of heart, and Elizabeth Barrett at least had little foreseen such outcome of even so ardent a literary friendship. She was thirty-eight years old, Browning

hirty-two, when they had begun writing to each ther, and, as the result of an accident to her spine n early womanhood, she had been compelled to ead the life of a recluse, seldom venturing out of oors, seeing few beyond her immediate family, nd keeping up her eager friendship chiefly by orrespondence. Her permanent invalidism had ecome all too much of an institution in the Browning household, and was especially so regarded y her father, a type of parent hard to conceive of owadays, and particularly in relation to such a daughter—a man who combined domestic des-otism with a charnel-house piety, autocratically egarding his children, particularly his hushed and loistered daughters—of whom there were two esides Elizabeth, both devoted to her—as the nquestioning ministrants of his gloomy will and leasure. For them to have any wishes that ran ounter to his was regarded as unfilial selfishness, nd nothing less than a complete subordination of heir lives to his grim routine satisfied his mono-maniac ideal of filial duty. Of this the marriage of ny one of them was proved in two instances to be sternly unforgivable transgression.

The man was one of those unconscious moral mon-ters which a narrow Puritanism, and the "business abits" of middle-class commercialism, occasionally reed, and in his case the autocracy encouraged by is administration in his earlier manhood of West

Indian plantations, from which he inherited considerable wealth, constituted to complete him as a dull and stupid tyrant, in whom egotism had finally culminated in the cruelty of mental disease. It is painful to think of the existence of such people at all, but that a nature so sensitive, so eagerly affectionate, as Elizabeth Barrett's should have been subject to so preposterous a despotism makes one dreary to recall and impotently furious to realize that the shade of Edward Moulton Barrett is long since out of the reach of appropriate castigation; as it is impossible with patience to read of the gentle submissiveness and a tender-conscienced solicitude with which his great-hearted daughter respected his strange feelings, till the moment when she at last became sorrowfully aware that what she had mistaken for parental love was merely a lunatic form of parental selfishness.

It says no little for her mental vigour that she was able to maintain her soul alive at all in such an atmosphere, not to speak of projecting it in a poetic creativeness so abounding; for her sofa was so evidently regarded in the household as little short of a mattress-grave over which her lugubrious parent was accustomed unctuously to pray with her each evening. The light was hardly allowed to enter her room, and it was a plain tempting of Providence for her to walk across the floor. Thoroughly, indeed, must she have learned that

esson of spiritual detachment which she so finely xpresses in "Aurora Leigh":

> "I was not, therefore, sad;
> My soul was singing at a work apart
> Behind the wall of sense, as safe from harm
> As sings the lark when sucked up out of sight
> In vortices of glory and blue air."

Yet, with everyone about her—including a conspiracy of family physicians—so complacently convinced of and even resigned to her moribund destiny, what wonder if her naturally buoyant spirit grew shadowed by her surroundings, and that dark images of cypresses and poppies and "the funeral shears" should come readily to her pen when her lover, blowing his Roland's horn beneath the walls of her dark tower, would summon her out into the sunshine and the future:

> "Look up and see the casement broken in,
> The bats and owlets builders in the roof!
> My cricket chirps against thy mandolin.
> Hush, call no echo up in further proof
> Of desolation! There's a voice within
> That weeps . . . as thou must sing . . . alone, aloof."

"In the spring—we shall see." It seems a simple thing that Browning should follow up his letter by calling on a correspondent who had thus immediately and open-handedly accepted him for a friend; but such a proceeding was no slight matter with the Barrett household, and it is not difficult to understand that it might take on the aspect of a somewhat

seriously exciting adventure to an imaginative woman, made unnaturally sensitive to contact with the outer world by her exotic seclusion. "And as to seeing you besides," she writes two months after their first letter, "I observe that you distrust me, and that perhaps you penetrate my morbidity and guess how when the moment comes to see a living human face to which I am not accustomed I shrink and grow pale in the spirit. Do you? . . . if you think that I shall not like to see you, you are wrong, for all your learning. But I shall be afraid of you at first—though I am not in writing thus. You are Paracelsus, and I am a recluse with nerves that have been all broken on the rack, and now hang loosely—quivering at a step and breath." Again and again she pleads for delay, urging, "this east wind that seems to blow through the sun and moon." To which Browning answers, with a protecting ring already in his voice, "if my truest heart's wishes avail, you shall laugh at east winds yet as I do"; and again, with something of an approach to a lover's fancifulness, "I am sure I never knew till now whether the East or West or South were the quarter to pray for—But surely the weather was a little better last week, and you, were you not better? And do you know—but it's all self-flattery I believe—still I cannot help fancying the East wind does my head harm too!" And yet again playfully pleading, growing bolder from letter to letter: "Surely the wind that sets my chestnut

ree dancing, all its baby-cone-blossoms, green now, ocking like fairy castles on a hill in an earthquake —that is South-west, surely!" But how charming the tender tact with which he submissively waits er pleasure, and at what courtly pains he is to ake her feel his reverent regard for the spirit as ell as the letter of her wish. In mid-April he rites, "yesterday I had occasion to go your way -past, that is, Wimpole Street, the end of it— nd, do you know, I did not seem to have leave from ou to go down it yet, much less count number fter number till I came to yours—much least than ss, look up when I did come there."

Surely in such passages as these we feel that ne sky is growing rosy with danger hints of dawn. lready she, on her side, had, woman-like, taken lecturing him on taking proper care of imself: "So when wise people happen to be l, they sit up till six o'clock in the morning nd get up again at nine?" and he in return ad promised to be good, and so "the day," hen, as he wrote, "I shall see you with my own, wn eyes," naturally grew in significance for oth the longer it was put off. To the last she rotests, and, in finally giving in, pathetically warns im—"There is nothing to see in me; nor to hear me—I never learnt to talk as you do in London; though I can admire that brightness of carved eech in Mr. Kenyon and others. If my poetry is orth anything to my eye, it is the flower of me.

I have lived most and been most happy in it, and so it has all my colours; the rest of me is nothing but a root, fit for the ground and the dark. . . . Not that I am not touched by your caring so at all! I am deeply touched now; and presently . . . I shall understand. Come then. There will be truth and simplicity, for you in any case; and a friend." So the momentous day is fixed and on Tuesday, May 20, 1845, the two poets did at last meet.

One is accustomed to think of Browning by the portraits of him in his later years, leonine and magisterial, but it is necessary to picture him on this occasion as "slim and dark and very handsome —just a trifle of a dandy." It is easy to realize that in early manhood his would be a personality victoriously vital and magnetic, radiating joyous strength, tempered with courtly gentleness, in that hushed, expectant, rather frightened room in Wimpole Street. And the charm of the little, frail, silk-clad figure that awaited "Paracelsus" is easy to recapture from the well-known portrait, shadowed it seems to me as it is with sickness, but with such a warmth and depth of concentrated life in the strange, great eyes looking out almost startlingly from a cave of lustrous hair. One is naturally left to one's own fancies to fill in that fateful afternoon, but, on returning home, Browning wrote a note full of a charming, boyish solicitude as to the impression he had made: "I trust to you

for a true account of how you are—if tired, if not tired, if I did wrong in any thing—or, if you please, right in any thing." Was his voice too loud ? His own people said it was apt to be ! " And did I stay too long ? "

To which comes reassuring answer ; but evidently Browning's good behaviour was of short duration, for two days after he seems to have written a letter, full of " wild speaking," which she can only return and beg him to destroy, warning him never to refer to it again, on pain of their ceasing to see each other. " Now, if there should be one word of answer attempted to this ; or of reference ; I must not . . . I will not see you again—and you will justify me later in your heart." Browning was duly submissive, destroyed the letter, and was allowed to call again—continues to do so from then on, once, sometimes twice, a week, and the correspondence, hardly a day missed, goes on, growing insensibly in intimacy—for all its learned interests, playful squabbles over Dante and so forth—till the suppressed fire at length breaks forth again, to be deprecated once more, but with a fashion of appeal that rather encourages than stays it, rouses, that is, an ever deeper tenderness in Browning's heart. Indeed, nothing could be more gentle, more exquisitely considerate than the manner in which Browning keeps himself in hand, allowing the silent pressure of his unspoken love insensibly to unfold and sustain her, with the

delicate patience that only profound feeling is master of. And, long before there is outspoken mention of love, the words have the accent of love on both sides. "Ever your own R. B." "Not a word, even under the little blue flowers!!! E. B. B." One thinks of:

> "Beloved, thou hast brought me many flowers
> Plucked in the garden, all the summer through."

And we know now that while, with such passionate renunciation, she was pushing this masterful gentle love away from her, as a feeling she had no right to accept or indulge, that all the time, unknown to her lover, her heart was crying out to itself in secret sonnets one day to be known as "Sonnets from the Portuguese." It is a fascinating study of two noble natures in travail to read these sonnets, and the poems that belong to them—such as "A Denial" and "Insufficiency"—side by side with these letters which to the condensed, star-like utterance of the poetry are as the raw material of the stellar turmoil, the nebular process, from which at last a new world was to emerge with steady shining. To take perhaps the most famous of the sonnets:

> "If thou must love me, let it be for nought
> Except for love's sake only . . .
> Neither love me for
> Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry. . . ."

How even more real still the poetry seems to be made by annotating it with such passages as these from Miss Barrett's letters: "Shall I tell you besides?—The first moment in which I seemed to admit to myself in a flash of lightning the possibility of your affection for me being more than dream-work . . . the first moment was that when you intimated (as you have done since repeatedly) that you cared for me not for a reason, but because you cared for me. . . . And when unreasonableness stands for a reason, it is a promising state of things, we may both admit." And again, "I have sometimes felt jealous of myself . . . of my own infirmities . . . and thought that you cared for me only because your chivalry touched them with a silver sound." To which Browning: "You see, you thought, if but for a moment, I loved your intellect—or what predominates in your poetry and is most distinct from your heart—better, or as well as you—did you not? And I have told you everything—explained everything . . . have I not? And now I will dare . . . yes, dearest, kiss you back to my heart again, my own. There—and there!"

It is the author of "Sordello" writing so, and the delight and surprise of this correspondence is in its rather unexpected everyday humanity—unless ye be as these little ones! And these learned lovers can be as childish, as boy-and-girlish, as the most unlettered lovers that ever wrote baby-talk. They can be just as happy and silly as if they never knew a

word of Greek. "Dearest, dearestest!" writes the author of "Aurora Leigh," signing herself, as she came to do, by her child's pet name, "Ba"—

> "Yes, call me by my pet-name! let me hear
> The name I used to run at when a child."

"Ba" is a contraction for "Baby," and in one letter we find the abstruse poet of Aristophanes' Apology writing it playfully in Greek letters! Such toys are all the more appealing from their springing, like children's flowers amid the rocks, out of pages of true Browningesque obscurity, prose marvellously contorted and dark as a thicket, which even the by no means pellucid Miss Barrett has occasionally to give up. "People say of you and of me, dear Mr. Browning, that we love the darkness and use a sphinxine idiom in our talk; and really you do talk a little like a sphinx in your argument drawn from 'Vivian Grey,'" and poor Browning sometimes anticipates for some of his dark sayings that they are "pretty sure to meet the usual fortune of my writings—you will ask what it means!"

Certainly, one sometimes recalls Wordsworth's gibe, and hopes "that they understand each other" for their almost painful solicitude that, lover-like, each should by no means miss the exact shade and refinement of their feelings and even words sometimes produces passages of agonized qualification worthy of George Meredith or Mr. Henry James. But, after all, their case was one that needed delicat

and subtle presentation, for, under the circumstances, their love could not be an affair of plain sailing. With Miss Barrett's health as it was, and still more as it was superstitiously supposed to be, love had, or seemed to have, exceptional need of anxious self-justification. Perplexity, however, was to be resolved and conclusion at length precipitated by circumstances the least promising. Fortunately, in this, as in other love stories, the tyrant was to have his uses. Early in the autumn of 1845, the family doctors had urged that Miss Barrett should spend the winter in Italy. So she would escape her annual winter relapse, and probably find permanent benefit. The trip was easy to arrange. Her brothers were ready to accompany her, and all her friends seconded the physicians in urging the experiment. But here the true nature of the egregious Mr. Barrett's parental affection declared itself. After sullenly, week after week, refusing to say yea or nay on the subject, thus keeping his daughter on the rack of suspense, he implacably refused his permission. Doctors and friends in vain expostulated, and the courtly Mr. Kenyon spoke his mind in an unwonted outburst. To no avail. Mr. Barrett continued foolishly adamant.

Then at last his daughter's eyes are opened and the exasperating patience of her love for him gives way—"the bitterest 'fact' of all is, that I had believed Papa to have loved me more than he obviously does: but I never

regret knowledge"—and at last she opens her arms to that other love, the noble truth of which admits no further denial. In the same letter in which she tells of her father's decision she writes: "In the meantime your letter comes—and if I could seem to be very unhappy after reading it . . . why it would be 'all pretence' on my part, believe me. Can you care for me so much . . . you? Then that is light enough to account for all the shadows, and to make them almost unregarded—the shadows of the life behind." Already, some days before, she had written, "You have touched me more profoundly than I thought even you could have touched me—my heart was full when you came here to-day. Henceforward I am yours for anything but to do you harm—and I am yours too much, in my heart, ever to consent to do you harm in that way. If I could consent to do it, not only should I be less loyal . . . but in one sense, less yours." She meant, as her reluctance had meant all along, that she felt it wrong to Browning to bring a sick wife to his arms. "Your life!" she had said over and over again, "if you gave it to me and I put my whole heart into it, what should I put but anxiety, and more sadness than you were born to? What could I give you, which it would not be ungenerous to give?"

"We have met late—it is too late to meet,
O friend, not more than friend!
Death's forecome shroud is tangled round my feet,
And if I step or stir, I touch the end.

In this last jeopardy
Can I approach thee, I, who cannot move?
How shall I answer thy request for love?
Look in my face and see."

To which Browning had but the one unwavering answer: "Let me say now—this once only—that I loved you from my soul, and gave you my life so much of it as you would take—and all that is done, not to be altered now: it was, in the nature of the proceeding, wholly independent of any return on your part," and again, "it is not since yesterday, nor ten nor twenty years before, that I began to look into my own life, and study its end, and requirements, what would turn to its good or its loss—and I know, if one may know anything, that to make that life yours, and increase it by union with yours, would render me supremely happy, as I said, and say, and feel. My whole suit to you is, in that sense, selfish."

Mr. Barrett's veto on the Italian trip, however, provoked a crisis of feeling sufficiently decisive for his daughter to give Browning her promise that, if the coming winter should prove favourable to her health, she would consent to their engagement. The winter was fortunately a mild one, and when the momentous spring at length arrived she had so far improved that, when Browning claimed her promise, she, still a little fearfully, but without any further reservation, laid her hand in his: "It is your hand, while you hold it: while you choose to

hold it, and while it is a living hand." "Do you know what you are to me . . . you ?" she continues. "We talk of the mild weather doing me good . . . of the sun doing me good . . . of going into the air as a means of good ! Have you done me no good, do you fancy, in loving me and lifting me up ? Has the unaccustomed divine love and tenderness been nothing to me ? Think ! Mrs. Jameson says earnestly . . . said to me the other day . . . that 'love was only magnetism.' And I say in my heart, that, magnet or no magnet, I have been drawn back into life by your means and for you . . . that I see the dancing mystical lights which are seen through the eyelids . . . and I think of you with an unspeakable gratitude always—always ! No other could have done this for me—it was not possible, except by you." Of course, this was the simple, one might say, the scientific, truth of the matter. In after years, no doubt, even the family physicians would have agreed that it was love that had saved, as it was to prolong so fruitfully, their patient's life.

> "I find thee ; I am safe, and strong, and glad,
> As one who stands in dewless asphodel
> Looks backward on the tedious time he had
> In the upper life—so I, with bosom-swell,
> Make witness, here, between the good and bad,
> That Love, as strong as Death, retrieves as well."

It was on May 6, 1846, that Miss Barrett finally answered yes to life and love, and henceforth we have no more talk of cypresses and poppies, but the

letters, from now on, are gay with a sense of nest building, talkative of plans and ways and means. Here Browning's character comes out in its most attractive manliness and simplicity.

He is much exercised as to methods of increasing his income, though she is ever wifely reassuring that, with their joint resources, they will be comfortably enough off, and will not hear of his doing violence to his genius by any activities likely to distract it. The friendly discussions of this question give rise to one utterance on Browning's part which, when one considers his intellectual greatness and distinction, is really touching, almost pathetic, in its child-hearted humility: "I feel sure," he writes, "that whenever I make up my mind to that, I can be rich enough and to spare—because along with what you have thought genius in me is certainly talent, what the world recognizes as such; and I have tried it in various ways, just to be sure that I was a little magnanimous in never intending to use it. Thus, in more than one of the reviews and newspapers that laughed my 'Paracelsus' to scorn ten years ago—in the same column, often, of these reviews, would follow a most laudatory notice of an elementary French book, on a new plan, which I 'did' for my old French Master, and he published—'that was really an useful work'!"

Surely, "greater love than this . . ."! and could anything be more deliciously naïve than Robert

Browning humbly priding himself on his succes with an Elementary French Grammar!

Miss Barrett's two sisters are now partially le into the secret, but neither they nor any othe friend are entirely taken into confidence, not eve the fairy Godfather, Mr. Kenyon; for fear o their being involved in Mr. Barrett's certai displeasure. His consent they do not even conside asking, knowing that it would be asked in vain an that it would provoke a painful scene, which hi daughter's frail nerves could not support. Thus almost farcical as it sounds, a woman of thirty-nin and a man of thirty-three, such a woman and such man too, are forced to plot an elopement as thoug they were runaway boy and girl. September i finally decided upon for the great adventure, and meanwhile, she, somewhat pathetically, tests he strength and courage by venturing out into th open air with her sister—an unheard-of escapade On the first occasion they drove together to Regent' Park, and, when there, she stepped out of th carriage and stood on the grass a few moments in dream. It had been so long since she had felt th earth under her feet and the air on her cheek. O another occasion we find the sisters going to servic to Paddington Chapel, possibly to accustom the timi recluse to the feeling of a church. "Now, that i over," she writes, "and the next time I shall ca less." As the day approaches, we have little huma touches as to "the ring" and the marriage licence

heir wedding-cards and the framing of the an-
ouncement of their marriage—which Browning
sks her to write for him! They have a good deal
f youthful fun over these details. "Wilson,"
Miss Barrett's devoted maid, must, by no means,
iss her "place in the story," for she it was that
n the morning of Saturday, September 12, 1846,
ccompanied her mistress, as they slipped out of the
Vimpole Street house together, and hailed a fly to
rive them to Marylebone Church—stopping on
he way at a chemist's to steady their nerves with
dose of sal volatile. At a quarter past eleven,
Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett were man
nd wife.

After the ceremony, as agreed upon between
hem, Mrs. Browning returned to her own
ome, and at one o'clock Browning too was at
ome again and writing: "I look back, and in
very one point, every word and gesture, every
etter, every silence—you have been entirely perfect
o me—I would not change one word, one look. . . .
Take every care of my life which is in that dearest
ttle hand; try and be composed, my beloved.
Remember to thank Wilson for me." Mrs. Brown-
ng remained a few days longer under her father's
oof, during which interval it was Browning's
haracteristic punctilio not to call upon her, because
e could not ask for her by her proper name; but
n Saturday, September 19, once more accompanied
y the faithful Wilson and her beloved dog "Flush,"

who was discreet enough not to bark as his fellow fugitives stole away, she left Wimpole Street for ever, and, joining her husband, the two poets henceforward to be named by the one illustrious name, caught the nine o'clock packet from Southampton and, to her delighted surprise, joined their friend Mrs. Jameson in Paris. After a brief rest there, the three friends journeyed on to Italy, a land to be immortally associated with their love story, henceforth to be their home, and to be loved by them with a passionate adopted patriotism—thus adding their names and fames to those other illustrious poets who have counted England well lost in that they found Italy. At Avignon they took advantage of a brief halt in their journey to make a pious pilgrimage to Vaucluse, in memory of Petrarch and Laura, and "there," as has been prettily described by Mrs. Browning's niece, Mrs. Macpherson, in her "Memoirs," "at the very source of the 'chiare, fresche, e dolci acque,' Mr. Browning took his wife up in his arms, and carrying her across the shallow, curling water, seated her on a rock that rose throne-like in the middle of the stream."

Browning must have felt elated indeed and justified of the responsibility for that loved life which he had undertaken, not without grave self-examination, to watch the immediate rejuvenescence wrought in his wife by their divine adventure. "Mrs. Jameson," she writes to her friend Miss Mitford, "says she, 'she won't call me improved, but trans-

ormed rather' "; and her letters to all her friends
t this time are radiant with the high spirits of a
new life which must have seemed to her nothing
hort of a veritable resurrection. Persephone,
back again from one of her annual seclusions in
Hades, cannot have rejoiced more in the recovered
ense of sun and blowing grass and all the good green
world. Their destination had been Pisa, and here
hey are to settle for six months, in rooms close to
he Duomo and the Leaning Tower. In the
ame letter to Miss Mitford is this gay picture of
poetic house-keeping after two months of marriage :
"Our housekeeping may end perhaps in being a
proverb among the nations, for at the beginning
it makes Mrs. Jameson laugh heartily. It disappoints
her theories, she admits—finding that, albeit poets,
we abstain from burning candles at both ends at
once, just as if we did statistics and historical
abstracts by nature instead. And do not think
that the trouble falls on me. Even the pouring
out of the coffee is a divided labour, and the
ordering of the dinner is quite out of my hands.
As for me, when I am so good as to let myself be
carried upstairs, and so angelical as to sit still on the
sofa, and so considerate, moreover, as not to put
my foot into a puddle, why my duty is considered
done to a perfection which is worthy of all adoration;
it really is not very hard work to please this task-
master."

It was during this stay at Pisa that Mrs. Browning

plucked up courage to reveal to her husband, with shrinking reluctance which witnesses the sensitiv sacredness with which she regarded her love for hin certain sonnets which during the months of the courtship she had written in secret, hardly meanin that even his eyes should ever see them. Mr. Gos has told the pretty story so well from Browning own account, that I shall quote his words "Their custom was, Mr. Browning said, to wri alone, and not to show each other what they ha written. This was a rule which he sometimes brok through, but she never. He had the habit of worl ing in a downstairs room, where their meals we spread, while Mrs. Browning studied in a roo on the floor above. One day, early in 1847, the breakfast being over, Mrs. Browning went upstair while her husband stood at a window watching th street till the table should be cleared. He w presently aware of some one behind him, althoug the servant was gone. It was Mrs. Browning, wh held him by the shoulder to prevent his turning look at her, and at the same time pushed a packet papers into the pocket of his coat. She told hi to read that, and to tear it up if he did not like i and then she fled again to her own room."

Need one say that the "packet of papers" w the "Sonnets from the Portuguese"? One ca imagine Browning's double joy as lover and poet in divine a gift. Such indeed are the gifts of the go one to the other. In later years Browning was

ring his "Men and Women" and "The Ring and he Book" as his offerings to her feet, though, to his thinking, no gift of his could equal hers, and t is one of the most attractive of all the attractive features of this perfect union that each of the two poets genuinely regarded the other as the greater. 'You are wrong—quite wrong," said Browning on one occasion to an acquaintance who had expressed a preference for his poetry over that of his wife's, 'she has genius; I am only a painstaking fellow. Can't you imagine a clever sort of angel who plots and plans, and tries to build up something—he wants to make you see it as he sees it—shows you one point of view, carries you off to another, hammering into your head the thing he wants you to understand? And whilst this bother is going on, God Almighty turns you off a little star—that's the difference between us. The true creative power is hers, not mine."

So on this occasion his enthusiasm masterfully overruled his wife's desire to keep the sonnets to themselves. "I dared not," he said, "reserve to myself the finest sonnets written in any language since Shakespeare's." But, at first, his wife would only consent to a private edition. This their friend, Miss Mitford, undertook for them, and a slender volume entitled "Sonnets, by E. B. B.," with the imprint, "Reading, 1847," and marked, "not for publication," was the first retiring form of what have since become the most popular love-poems

in the English language. Not till three year after did they appear under their present title— which was a suggestion of Browning's in preferenc to his wife's proposal to call them "Sonnets trans lated from the Bosnian," in allusion to her poen "Catarina to Camoens," one of Browning's ow favourites.

So in Pisa began that beautiful life together as i was to continue for fifteen happy years. Lov has few histories more inspiring, more entirel satisfying to contemplate than this harmony o two natures, each so richly endowed with spiritua and intellectual gifts, and each, at the same tim so fortunately possessed of gracious human qualitie heart wed with heart, as brain with brain, lif shared in completest sympathy on its humble as on its loftiest level.

If ever there was a marriage made in heaven, it wa this one, and certainly Wordsworth might set h mind at rest, for no two people ever more thoroughl "understood" each other than these whom th rest of the world found so humorously incom prehensible.

Mrs. Browning's sense of humour must hav counted for no little in this harmony, as it is on of the most attractive qualities of her delightful natural letters. In these may be read as in gossipy diary the history of the ensuing years, yea lived mostly in their Florentine home, that Ca Guidi immortally associated with their name

with occasional trips to England and Paris, years of an even tenour, work done side by side, a vivid social intercourse with a few warmly regarded friends, the struggle for Italian liberty an ever-present burning interest passionately shared, and Mrs. Browning's preoccupation with spiritualism the only shadow of a shade of difference ever between them.

On March 9, 1849, a son had been born to them, and here again Mrs. Browning was to manifest her versatility by proving that a woman could be at once a great poet and the most human of mothers. Indeed, their intellectual distinction seems to be the last thing these two "great minds" were troubled about. Browning's chief pride seems to have been in his wife's health, and his one ambition to be a good husband, while her one vanity seems to have been in his good looks.

On one occasion he had driven her to despair by capriciously shaving his beard. Here is her delightful womanly outburst in a confidential letter to his sister: "A comfort is that Robert is considered to be looking better than he ever was known to look—and this notwithstanding the greyness of his beard . . . which indeed is, in my own mind, very becoming to him, the argentine touch giving a character of elevation and thought to the whole physiognomy. This greyness was suddenly developed—let me tell you how. He was in a state of bilious irritability on the morning of his arrival in

Rome, from exposure to the sun or some such cause and in a fit of suicidal impatience shaved away hi whole beard . . . whiskers and all!! I cried when saw him, I was so horror-struck. I might have gon into hysterics and still been reasonable—for n human being was ever so disfigured by so simpl an act. Of course, I said, when I recovered heart an voice, that everything was at an end between hin and me if he didn't let it all grow again directly and (upon the further advice of his looking-glass) h yielded the point—and the beard grew—but i grew white—which was the just punishment o the gods. Our sins leave their traces."

So the years go by, but no lapse of years can tam Mrs. Browning's indomitable youthfulness. "B sure," we find her writing to a friend in 185 "that it is highly moral to be young as long a possible. Women who throw up the game earl (or even late) and wear dresses 'suitable to thei years' (that is, as hideous as possible) are a disgrac to their sex."

Certainly she herself had received from natur the gift of a divine girlishness, and the radiance of spirit eagerly young to the last seems to have trans formed her frail, sensitive form as with an interio light, as its white flame, during these happy, arden years, was too surely consuming its tenement of clay That very intensity of her nature, which for s long had seemed to animate and sustain her physica life by purely spiritual energy, was, rather than an

physical ill, to wear it out. Probably the death of one of her sisters, and—so vitally were her sympathies engaged in Italy's struggle for freedom—the death of Cavour, were as accountable for her last illness as an attack of bronchitis, the like of which she had come safely through before on more than one occasion. But alas! indeed the allotted span of one of the most beautiful realized dreams in the history of human lives had been reached, and it was still "with a face like a girl's," to use Browning's own words, that she died suddenly in his arms in the night of June 29, 1861. Browning, writing to his friend Miss Haworth, thus memorably describes her end and unlocks his bereaved heart. His wife had made light of her illness, and was entirely without presentiment of its seriousness, and on the last evening they had talked over plans for the coming summer. "I sent the servants away," writes Browning, "and her maid to bed—so little reason for disquietude did there seem. Through the night she slept heavily and brokenly—that was the bad sign—but then she would sit up, take her medicine, say unrepeatable things to me, and sleep again. At four o'clock there were symptoms that alarmed me. I called the maid and sent for the doctor. She smiled as I proposed to bathe her feet. 'Well, you are determined to make an exaggerated case of it!' Then came what my heart will keep till I see her again and longer—the most perfect expression of her love to me within

my whole knowledge of her. Always smilingly happily, and with a face like a girl's—and in a few minutes she died in my arms; her head on my cheek. These incidents so sustain me that I tell them to her beloved ones as their right: there was no lingering, no acute pain, no consciousness of separation, but God took her to Himself as you would lift a sleeping child from a dark, uneasy bed into your arms and the light. . . . Her last word was when I asked 'How do you feel?'—'Beautiful.' You know I have her dearest wishes and interests to attend to at once—her child to care for, educate, establish properly; and my own life to fulfil as properly—all just as she would require were she here. I shall leave Italy altogether for years—go to London for a few days' talk with Arabel—then go to my father and begin to try leisurely what will be best for Peni (his son)—but no more 'house keeping' for me, even with my family. I shall grow, still, I hope—but my root is taken and remains."

For twenty-eight years Browning was to live on and fulfil himself, growing to that crowning height of his genius, "The Ring and the Book," which seven years later he was to bring to her grave praying that the ring to which he likens it might—

> "Lie outside thine, Lyric Love,
> Thy rare gold ring of verse (the poet praised)
> Linking our England to his Italy."

To this sacred task of fatherhood he brought a devotion only comparable with that of his own father before him, and in the social world of London he became a memorable, distinguished figure, but, as he had written, "my root is taken and remains," and, as has been finely said, "none ever saw Browning upon earth again but only a splendid surface."

How faithfully beneath that "splendid surface" the fire of his love burned on through the years is proved by an explosion of anger which in the very year of his own death, 1889, astonished the literary world with its vehemence. His eye had fallen on an old letter to Edward FitzGerald, which FitzGerald's editor had carelessly included in his "Life and Letters." In this letter Fitz-Gerald, writing confidentially, of course, to one of his friends, had spoken slightingly of Mrs. Browning. "Mrs. Browning's death is rather a relief to me, I must say: no more Aurora Leighs, thank God!" were the unlucky words on which Browning's eye had fallen. That such words should cause him intense pain and arouse his fierce indignation is surely not surprising, and the savagely interpretative form these feelings took, while considered indecorous at the time, will, I think, find full justification with any who have realized the fervour and the sacredness of the worship thus casually profaned. At all events, this sonnet "To

Edward FitzGerald" appeared in "The Athenæum" of July 13, 1889:

> "I chanced upon a new book yesterday;
> I opened it, and, where my finger lay
> 'Twixt page and uncut page, these words I read—
> Some six or seven at most—and I learned thereby
> That you, FitzGerald, whom by ear and eye
> She never knew, 'thanked God my wife was dead.'
> Ay, dead! and were yourself alive, good Fitz,
> How to return your thanks would task my wits.
> Kicking you seems the common lot of curs—
> While more appropriate greeting lends you grace,
> Surely to spit there glorifies your face—
> Spitting from lips once sanctified by hers."

FitzGerald's words had affected him, "with the directness of a sharp physical blow." "I felt as if she had died yesterday," he said to a friend. Five months after (December 12, 1889) he himself lay dead in Venice. The foregoing summer he had expressed the wish that he might be buried "wherever he might die: if in England, with his mother; if in France, with his father; if in Italy, with his wife." This wish, however, could not be fulfilled as the English cemetery in Florence where Mrs Browning lies had been closed and might not open its gates even to so illustrious a guest. Venice thereupon, sought the honour of being his resting place, but finally England and Westminster Abbey claimed him for their own. That sentiment from which it is hard, and scarcely necessary, to escape would feel better satisfied if we could think of these two great poets and lovers lying side by side

either in that Italian soil for which they had so deep an affection, or in their native land to whose bede-roll of great poets they add their laurelled names, but, after all, it is easy to forego the gratification of such earth-born fancies in the case of two who were so essentially children of the spirit, and whom we may more appropriately think of as reunited in that " abode where the eternal are."

X

FREDERIC CHOPIN AND GEORGE SAND

FEW love-stories have suffered so much from the vulgarization of gossip as that of Frederic Chopin and George Sand. A whole literature of anecdote and reminiscence has sprung up like a bewildering thicket about their names, till the comparative simplicity of their relationship has been obscured by a cloud of witnesses, who continually pour confusion on each other, and the essential value of it, whatever it may have been, to the two most concerned, has been all but lost sight of. That for a long period it brought satisfactions of a rare and deep kind to two people, gifted alike with the difficult nature of genius, is the important thing to know about it. External criticism on its irregularity, or any other comment that forgets this central fact, is irrelevant. That it was to good purpose in the lives of Chopin and George Sand seems to be sufficiently proved by its enduring so long; for, had it not been so, having nothing to ensure its continuance but the will and pleasure of the two lovers, it would have come to a

speedier end. George Sand's affair with Alfred de Musset had, it will be remembered, burned itself out in a year, and, apart from the distinction of the poet concerned, demands no more serious consideration than the rank and file of George Sand's numerous polygamous fancies. An attachment, however, which, on one side at least, has ten years of faithfulness to its credit is only superficially to be denied the importance of domesticity. It is to be feared that the spiritual life of most legal marriages is exhausted in a much shorter period. And, indeed, the quality of the attachment of Chopin and George Sand is hardly less domestic than its longevity. It hardly belongs to the great passions, or the ideal devotions of the world, but is rather the story of a matrimonial comradeship, the "mothering" element, on George Sand's side, at all events, being perhaps its most conspicuous feature.

George Sand seems to have been more of a nurse and a mother to Chopin than a mistress or a muse, and to have supplied his clinging, protection-seeking nature rather with a sheltering companionship than with any more intense or romantic preoccupation; though, indeed, the feeling seems to have gone deepest with Chopin, if one may judge from his reference to George Sand two days before his death. To his friend Franchomme he said, "She had said to me that I would die in no arms but hers." But the cry was perhaps more that of a sick child, missing the comfort of a familiar presence, than that

of a heart-broken lover. Yet, of course, George Sand's conquering magnetism, a magnetism rather masculine than feminine in its power—not unlike Catherine of Russia's, one may surmise—must have had its share in the attachment, particularly at its beginning; as Chopin's somewhat feminine grace and distinction, no doubt, first took George Sand's fancy, his genius and his fame playing no small part —for it must not be forgotten that such attributes always went for much with George Sand, whose emotions were closely bound up with her ambition and her love of conquest. The fact of a man being a genius and famous was sufficient for her to set her conquering-cap at him, and there were few men who could resist her great black eyes and her "strange, soft ways."

Her first impression upon Chopin, however, had been the reverse of favourable. Various stories are told of their first meeting, but Chopin's biographer Niecks, places most credit on Liszt's account who said, "I ought to know best, seeing that I was instrumental in bringing the two together. George Sand, it appears, having been interested in what she had heard of the Polish musician's personality, interested, too, in his compositions, had asked Liszt to make them acquainted. Chopin, however, had held back, frankly confessing his dislike of literary women. But George Sand had persisted, and finally Liszt had brought her along with others to a little party at Chopin's rooms, o

an occasion when Chopin, elated with some new compositions, had expressed the desire to play them to some of his friends. So little like love at first sight was this first meeting that Chopin had written to one friend, "Yesterday I met George Sand. . . . She made a very disagreeable impression upon me"; and to another he had said, "What a repellent woman the Sand is! But is she really a woman? I am inclined to doubt it."

It is not difficult to understand Chopin's first feelings of antipathy, when one remembers his aristocratic super-refinement, on the one hand, and George Sand's somewhat blatant bohemianism on the other, so at variance with Chopin's delicate and somewhat finicky ideal of femininity. George Sand scorned all that feminine finesse he valued, smoked strong cigars, and frequently wore men's clothes. Chopin, the spoiled protégé of aristocracy, was accustomed to exquisite Court ladies, and was a severe critic of their dressmakers. Still, when George Sand had made up her mind to charm, she seldom failed; and whether or not we can find it in her portraits, or divine it from descriptions of her, her magnetism must have been very extraordinary. Heine has described her with great particularity, but at too great length to quote, and with too much whimsicality really to portray. But he calls her "as beautiful as the Venus of Milo"—whom she hardly seems to suggest—and allows her almost every gift and grace except wit in conversation,

in which she seems to have been oddly lacking "George Sand never says anything witty; she is indeed one of the most unwitty Frenchwomen I know." The charm was evidently, then, not in her conversation. But beautiful, of a dark masculine—say, rather boyish—type she certainly seems to have been. Liszt seems to suggest her better than any one, and to suggest, too, the secret of the power she was soon to gain over the sensitive, feminine Chopin.

"Dark and olive-complexioned Lélia," he writes, "thou hast walked in solitary places, sombre as Lara, distracted as Manfred, rebellious as Cain, but more fierce, more pitiless, more inconsolable than they, because thou hast found among the hearts of men none feminine enough to love thee as they have been loved, to pay to thy virile charms the tribute of a confiding and blind submission, of a silent and ardent devotion, to suffer his allegiance to be protected by thy Amazonian strength!"

With this impression of George Sand, we may contrast Niecks's description of Chopin: "A slim frame of middle height; fragile but wonderfully flexible limbs; delicately formed hands; very small feet; an oval, softly outlined head; a pale transparent complexion; long silken hair of a light chestnut colour, parted on one side; tender brown eyes, intelligent rather than dreamy; a finely curved aquiline nose; a sweet, subtle smile; graceful and varied gestures: such was the outward presence of Chopin." "*Couleur de bière*" is one

curiously unpoetic description of his eyes—though, aside from its associations, it must be remembered that beer is a beautifully coloured liquid. Liszt again adds an evocative touch or two: "The *timbre* of his voice was subdued and often muffled; and his movements had such a distinction, and his manners such an impress of good society that one treated him unconsciously like a prince. His whole appearance made one think of that of the *convolvuli*, which on incredibly slender stems balance divinely coloured chalices of such vaporous tissue that the slightest touch destroys them."

The first meeting of these two strongly contrasted beings was in the early part of 1837—Chopin being at that time twenty-eight and George Sand five years his senior—and, whatever had been Chopin's first antipathy, it is evident that it was of no long duration, for by the summer of the same year we find him one of her guests down at Nohant, George Sand's country home, where in the summer-time she was accustomed to gather about her, in what must have been house-parties of uncommon interest, most of the brilliant men and women of the day. All and sundry were welcome there, on the one condition of their possessing genius or charm. Liszt's heart-friend, the Comtesse d'Agoult —"Marie"—was staying with George Sand when she thus sent, through Liszt, this characteristic invitation: "Marie told me that there was some hope of Chopin. Tell Chopin that I beg of him to

accompany you; that Marie cannot live without him, and that I adore him." And, a few days later she wrote again, to the Comtesse d'Agoult, who had evidently in the interval returned to Paris, "I want the fellows [Liszt and a pupil of his], I want them as soon and as *long* as possible. I want them *à mort*. I want also Chopin and all the Mickiewiczs and Grzymalas in the world. I want even Sue if you want him. What more would I not want if that were your fancy? For instance, M. de Suzannet or Victor Schoelcher! Everything, a lover excepted."

George Sand loved to have people about her, enjoyed being the good hostess, a characteristic again, in which she was at the opposite pole to Chopin, who cared little for society—except that of *la haute noblesse*, a leaning which, if second nature to him from his early petting by grand dukes and duchesses, was not, his artistic *confrères* had the right to complain, without a touch of snobbishness. George Sand—that is Amantine Lucile Aurore Dupin—on the other hand, was, by inheritance, a singular blend of aristocrat and democrat, the royal blood of Augustus the Strong and of Louis XV running in her veins on her father's side, her mother being "the daughter of a Paris bird-seller," and "by the force of circumstances" something not far removed from a *cocotte* when General Dupin first saw and loved her at a small theatre in Italy during Napoleon's Italian campaign. George Sand, whose devotion to her mother was a fine trait of her

generous character, used, perhaps not unreasonably, to boast of this fusion of blood, linking her on the one hand with kings and on the other with the people. She was unmistakably, by turns, a true daughter of both; and if the promiscuity of her attachments may seem to suggest the maternal strain, yet the high-handed manner in which she indulged them suggested rather the imperious, above-criticism wantonness of a great lady. If she was libertine, at least it was after the manner of princes.

When she met Chopin she had already run the gamut of many experiences, and the affair of Alfred de Musset was three years in the background. Chopin himself had but recently put behind him his devotion to Maria Wodzińska, a devotion that still lives for us in the waltz numbered "Op. 69, No. 1." A still earlier inspiration had been Constantia Gladkowska, and, as is the way of poets and musicians, other less important fancies had lived and died to contribute their share towards the evolution of his temperament and the refinement of that peculiar sentiment of blended sorrow and beauty we call Chopinesque. "If," as Shakespeare's Duke says, "music be the food of love," love is as certainly the necessary food of music, and if society objects to the process it must, logically, be content to go without the product: for an intense susceptibility to persons of the opposite sex is one of the first conditions of all artistic genius, perhaps of

any kind of genius. In this respect Chopin an George Sand were one, though the susceptibility i Chopin's case seems to have been more purely, s to say, for artistic purposes, less violent and un bridled in its vitality. It pushed him to no excesses and seems to have been largely superficial, and easil wearied. More than with most musicians or poets, th sadness and beauty of Chopin's music seems to hav come of his sensitiveness to the impersonal world sadness of the world-beauty than to have bee dependent on his personal history.

George Sand is quoted as saying of him tha "although his heart was ardent and devoted it was not continuously so to any one person but surrendered itself alternately to five or si affections, each of which, as they struggle within it, got by turns the mastery over all th others. He would passionately love three wome in the course of one evening party and forge them as soon as he had turned his back, while eac of them imagined that she had exclusively charme him." And George Sand goes on to tell this quain story illustrative of the perishability of feeling which he actually deemed serious : "He had taken, she says, "a great fancy to the granddaughter of celebrated master. He thought of asking her i marriage at the same time that he entertained th idea of another marriage in Poland—his loyalt being engaged nowhere, and his fickle heart floatin from one passion to the other. The young Parisia

received him very kindly, and all went as well as could be till on going to visit her one day in company with another musician who was of more note in Paris than he at that time, she offered a chair to this gentleman before thinking of inviting Chopin to be seated. He never called on her again, and forgot her immediately."

Marriage for such a nature is obviously an absurd irrelevance. To such, a fair face is merely the passing accident of inspiration, the symbol of universal feelings, with as little individual claim on the musician as the particular skylark that inspired Shelley, or the particular daisy that inspired Wordsworth.

In this respect, then, Chopin and George Sand appear to have been well matched, and on neither side does there seem to have been opportunity for heart-break.

Whatever power George Sand held over him, Chopin, therefore, ran no tragic risk in visiting Nohant, and that first visit of his there in the summer of 1837 has less the aspect of a dawning love affair than the beginning of a semi-matrimonial comradeship. Details of this visit, as also of a second visit in the following summer of 1830, are wanting. In the winter of 1837, however, we first hear of Chopin's consumptive tendency, and it was the fear of spending another winter in the inclement air of Paris that brought about the famous Sand-Chopin sojourn in Majorca, of which

so much has been written and which first set the gossips going. Actually, there seems little in the episode so outrageously defiant of *les convenances* when the plain facts are considered. George Sand who had recently won legal freedom from her boorish husband—a husband who had for years been calmly living on her inheritance, and giving her nothing but a paltry allowance from her own money—had won with it the guardianship of her son Maurice and her daughter Solange, to whom she was tenderly devoted. The lad suffered from rheumatism, and his mother had planned to take him south for the winter. Seeing that Chopin stood in like need of a warmer climate, it seemed natural and proper enough that the friends should join forces. Here is George Sand's account of the matter, which seems reasonable enough :

" As I was making my plans and preparations for departure, Chopin, whom I saw every day and whose genius and character I tenderly loved, said to me that if he were in Maurice's place he would soon recover. I believed it, and I was mistaken. I did not put him in the place of Maurice on the journey but beside Maurice. His friends had for long urged him to go and spend some time in the south of Europe. People believed that he was consumptive. Gaubert examined him and declared to me that he was not. 'You will save him, in fact,' he said to me 'if you give him air, exercise, and rest.' Others knowing well that Chopin would never make up his

nind to leave the society and life of Paris with-ut being carried off by a person whom he loved nd who was devoted to him, urged me strongly not o oppose the desire he showed so *à propos* and in a uite unhoped-for way. As time showed, I was vrong in yielding to their hopes and my own olicitude. It was indeed enough to go abroad lone with two children, one already ill, the other ull of exuberant health and spirits, without taking pon myself also a terrible anxiety and a physician's esponsibility."

George Sand, therefore, set out for the South of France with her two children, in November, 1838, topping at various places of interest on the way, eaving Chopin to make up his mind whether or not he would join her in Perpignan. This he did not fail to do. "Chopin arrived at Perpignan last night," wrote George Sand to her friend, Madame Marliani, in that "mothering" vein which charac-terizes all her references to her friend, "fresh as a rose, and rosy as a turnip; moreover, in good health, having stood his four nights of the mail-coach heroically." Thence they took ship to Barcelona, whence, after a day or two's sight-seeing, they shipped again for Palma, the capital of Majorca, where they arrived without mishap, to find the anticipated summer-heat awaiting them—but with t, alas! a pitiful paucity of accommodation, not to mention "vermin in their beds and scorpions in their soup." In the neighbourhood of the town,

however, they found a small villa to rent, which, at first sight, seemed promising. "I am leaving the town," wrote George Sand to her friend Madame Marliani once more, "and shall establish myself in the country: I have a pretty furnished house, with a garden and a magnificent view, for fifty francs per month. Besides, two leagues from there I have a cell, that is to say, three rooms and a garden full of oranges and lemons, for thirty-five francs *per year*, in the large monastery of Valdemosa."

All seemed delightful for the moment, and Chopin wrote thus enthusiastically to his friend Fontana:

"My dear friend:—

"I am at Palma, among palms, cedars, cactuses, aloes, and olive, orange, lemon, fig, and pomegranate trees, etc., which the Jardin des Plantes possesses only thanks to its stoves. The sky is like a turquoise, the sea is like lazuli, and the mountains are like emeralds. The air? The air is just as in heaven. During the day there is sunshine, and consequently it is warm—everybody wears summer clothes. During the night guitars and songs are heard everywhere and at all hours. Enormous balconies with vines overhead, Moorish walls. . . . The town, like everything here, looks towards Africa. . . . In one word, a charming life!

"Dear Julius, go to Pleyel—the piano has not yet arrived—and ask him by what route they have sent it. The Preludes you shall have soon.

"I shall probably take up my quarters in a

delightful monastery in one of the most beautiful sites in the world: sea, mountains, palm trees, cemetery, church of the Knights of the Cross, ruins of mosques, thousand-year-old olive trees! . . . Ah, my dear friend, I am now enjoying life a little more; I am near what is most beautiful—I am a better man."

But clouds were soon to darken this paradise. The piano referred to was to be one of their first troubles. Not only had it "not yet arrived," but was not to arrive for another two months, being held up by the exorbitancy of the Palma customs, who demanded no less than seven hundred francs duty upon it. A compromise, at three hundred francs, however, was eventually reached, and the desired instrument at last housed in the great haunted monastery, to contribute its share in one of the most famous compositions of the great composer, whose sensitive soul had in the interval suffered no little vexation from a wretched native instrument, which was probably as great a hardship to him as the rainy season setting in shortly after their arrival, the miserable food, and a sudden alarming attack of his complaint, brought on by the inclement weather. Chopin's illness, far from winning sympathy from the inhospitable islanders, who had begun to look on the party askance and to make provisioning difficult, because of their non-attendance at church, brought an imperative notice

to quit from the Spanish landlord, ignorantly panic stricken with fear of infection, and a preposterou bill for white-washing and replastering his house Chopin's refusal to be bled had prejudiced th medical authorities, so the distinguished refugee were only too glad to find lodgings in the old Valde mosa monastery, where, if there were plenty o inconveniences, there was at least no little com pensating romance. A more dramatic retreat ca hardly be imagined than this huge pile of deserte buildings, with its endless cells and chapels an cloisters, and gardens high up among the hill screamed over by eagles and echoing with the roa of mountain torrents and the sound of the sea. I her book, *Un Hiver à Marjorque*, George San has described the place and their various experience there in her splendidly vivid way. Here is one o her pictures :

" I never heard the wind sound so like mournfu voices and utter such despairing howls as in thes empty and sonorous galleries. The noise of th torrents, the swift motion of the clouds, the gran monotonous sound of the sea, interrupted by th whistling of the storm and the plaintive cries of sea birds which passed, quite terrified and bewildered, i the squalls; then thick fogs which fell suddenly lik a shroud and which, penetrating into the cloiste through the broken arcades, rendered us invisibl and made the little lamp we carried to guide u appear like a will-o'-the-wisp wandering under th

galleries; and a thousand other details of this monastic life which crowd all at once into my memory: all combined made indeed this monastery the most romantic abode in the world.

"I was not sorry to see for once fully and in reality what I had seen only in a dream, or in the fashionable ballads, and in the nuns' scene in *Robert le Diable* at the Opéra. Even fantastic apparitions were not wanting to us."

But life at the monastery was not all storm and screaming eagles, and had it not been for Chopin's cough, the trouble with the piano, and the difficulty of food supplies, these further idyllic-domestic glimpses prove how ideal it might well have been, and now and again actually was. Writing on January 15, 1839, to Madame Marliani, George Sand says:

"We inhabit the Carthusian monastery of Valdemosa, a really sublime place, which I have hardly the time to admire, so many occupations have I with my children, their lessons, and my work. . . . Happily, Maurice is in admirable health; his constitution is only afraid of frost, a thing unknown here. But the little Chopin is very depressed and always coughs much. For his sake I await with impatience the return of fine weather, which will not be long in coming. . . . I am plunged with Maurice in Thucydides and company; with Solange in the indirect object and the agreement of the participle. Chopin plays on a poor Majorcan piano

which reminds me of that of Bouffé in *Pauvr Jacques*. I pass my nights generally in scrawling When I raise my nose, it is to see through the sky light of my cell the moon which shines in the mids of the rain on the orange trees, and I think no mor of it than she."

Again, a few days later :

"The climate is delicious. At the time I ar writing, Maurice is gardening in his shirt-sleeve and Solange, seated under an orange tree loade with fruit, studies her lesson with a grave ai We have bushes covered with roses, and spring coming in ! Our winter lasted six weeks, not cold but rainy to a degree to frighten us. It is deluge ! "

Still again, a month later, the Pleyel pian having now arrived :

"You see me at my Carthusian monastery, sti sedentary, and occupied during the day with m children, at night with my work. In the midst c all this the warbling of Chopin, who goes his usu pretty way, and whom the walls of the cell are muc astonished to hear."

On the whole, this Majorca experience, whatev its drawbacks, had many poetic compensations, an one may well echo the sentiment of Chopin biographer, Niecks, when he says : "I like t picture to myself the vaulted cell, in which Pleyel piano sounded so magnificently, illumined by lamp, the rich traceries of the Gothic cha

shadowed on the wall, George Sand absorbed in her studies, her children at play, and Chopin pouring out his soul in music."

Genius has certainly been less fortunately circumstanced, nor was the time by any means unmomentous for Chopin's art. In fact, though musical critics disagree on the matter, there seems little doubt that some of the master's most characteristic compositions were either written, perfected, or inspired to the accompaniment of those winter tempests that so sorely tried his lungs and depressed his spirits. It seems likely that we owe some of the Preludes and the great G Minor Ballade to this winter with George Sand in Valdemosa. George Sand gives a vivid account of the composition of the famous Sixth Prelude, and, though the accuracy of her memory has been doubted and her "novelist's" method somewhat over-criticized, an extract from it, at all events, makes delightful reading:

"The poor great artist was a detestable patient. What I had feared, but unfortunately not enough, happened. He became completely demoralized. Bearing pain courageously enough, he could not overcome the disquietude of his imagination. The monastery for him was full of terrors and phantoms, even when he was well. He did not say so, and I had to guess it. On returning from my nocturnal explorations in the ruins with my children, I found him at ten o'clock at night before his piano, his

face pale, his eyes wild, and his hair almost standin on end. It was some moments before he coul recognize us. He then made an attempt to laugh and played to us sublime things he had just com posed, or rather, to be more accurate, terrible c heartrending ideas which had taken possession c him, as it were without his knowledge, in that hou of solitude, sadness, and terror.

"It was there that he composed the mos beautiful of those short pages he modestly entitle 'Préludes.' They are masterpieces. Several pre sent to the mind visions of deceased monks an the sounds of the funeral chants which beset h imagination; others are melancholy and sweet— they occurred to him in the hours of sunshine an of health, with the noise of the children's laughte under the window, the distant sound of guitars, th warbling of the birds among the humid foliage, an the sight of the pale little full-blown roses on th snow.

"Others again are of a mournful sadness, and while charming the ear, rend the heart. There one of them which occurred to him on a disma rainy evening which produces a terrible menta depression. We had left him well that day, Mauric and I, and had gone to Palma to buy things w required for our encampment. The rain had com on, the torrents had overflowed, we had travelle three leagues in six hours to return in the midst c the inundation, and we arrived in the dead of nigh

without boots, abandoned by our driver, having passed through unheard-of dangers. We made haste, anticipating the anxiety of our invalid. It had been indeed great, but it had become as it were congealed into a kind of calm despair and he played his wonderful prelude weeping. On seeing us enter he rose, uttering a great cry, then he said to us, with a wild look and in a strange tone, 'Ah! I knew well that you were dead!'

"When he had come to himself again, and saw the state in which we were, he was ill at the retrospective spectacle of our dangers; but he confessed to me afterwards that while waiting for our return he had seen all this in a dream and that, no longer distinguishing this dream from reality, he had grown calm and been almost lulled to sleep while playing the piano, believing that he was dead himself. He saw himself drowned in a lake; heavy and ice-cold drops of water fell at regular intervals upon his breast, and when I drew his attention to those drops of water which were actually falling at regular intervals upon the roof, he denied having heard them. He was even vexed at what I translated by the term imitative harmony. He protested with all his might, and he was right, against the puerility of these imitations for the ear. His genius was full of mysterious harmonies of nature, translated by sublime equivalents into his musical thought, and not by a servile repetition of external sounds. His composition of this evening was

indeed full of the drops of rain which resounded o the sonorous tiles of the monastery, but they wer transformed in his imagination and his music int tears falling from heaven on his heart."

Still, in spite of the fascinations of spring civilized France was beginning to seem good again Chopin, too, was spitting blood. So, after a stay i Marseilles, and a trip to Genoa, the scene once mor shifts to Nohant. At Nohant lived an excellen physician, Dr. Papet, a friend of George Sand' who was good for Chopin, if only for the reason tha he took a cheerful view of his case, which seems fo the time to have lost its serious aspect, and there too, were many friends in whose society Chopi took pleasure, and were, George Sand says, "dispose to spoil him as I did." Considerable petting an spoiling seems to have been a necessity of the grea composer's existence, and herein, no doubt, Georg Sand found a congenial *métier*, though there seem no doubt that her " detestable patient " to a grea degree came justly by the adjective.

"All, then, went very well at first," George San continues, " and I entertained eventually the ide that Chopin might rest and regain his health b spending a few summers with us, his work necessaril calling him back to Paris in the winter."

As it proved, that work called George Sand bac to Paris too, and from now on to the final ruptur of their friendship, and to within a year of Chopin death, their two lives were to be lived side by sid

n Paris as neighbours, and at Nohant as hostess and uest. For, to glance again at the supposedly out-aged *convenances*, Chopin "lived with" George and, both in Paris and at Nohant, neither more nor ess, on the surface at least, than any other of her ntimate acquaintance. At Nohant he was one among other of her visitors, and in Paris, though he vas her next-door neighbour, occupying one of her *avillons* in the Rue Pigalle, and later a house of his own, next to hers, Madame Marliani occupying a hird, in the Cité (Court or Square) d'Orléans, his establishment was always distinct from hers, and his regard for the seemliness of their relationship vas scrupulous. "Chopin," says Niecks, "treated George Sand with the greatest respect and devotion; he was always *aux petits soins* with her. It is characteristic of the man and exemplifies strikingly the delicacy of his taste and feeling that his demeanour in her house showed in no way the ntimate relation in which he stood to the mistress of it: he seemed to be a guest like any other occasional visitor."

Niecks tells one or two anecdotes, which give charming glimpses of the two together among their friends. On one occasion George Sand had been rhapsodizing on the charms of country life.

"'How well you have spoken!' said Chopin aïvely.

"'You think so?' she replied. 'Well, then, et me to music!'

"Hereupon Chopin improvised a veritable pastoral symphony, and George Sand, placing herself beside him and laying her hand gently on his shoulder, said: 'Go on, velvet fingers [*Courage doigts de velours*]!'"

Here is another anecdote:

"George Sand had a little dog which was in the habit of turning round and round in the endeavour to catch its tail. One evening when it was thus engaged, she said to Chopin: 'If I had your talent I would compose a pianoforte piece for this dog.' Chopin at once sat down to the piano, and improvised the charming Waltz in D flat (Op. 64) which hence has obtained the name of Valse *du petit chien*."

An apparently incongruous gift which must have contributed no little to Chopin's social charm was a talent for mimicry to which Balzac has alluded in "Un Homme d'Affaires," and to which he would occasionally have recourse, as with a sudden right about-face, whimsically to relieve the tension after his playing of some particularly overwrought composition. "After having plunged his audience," writes George Sand, "into a profound *recueillement*, or into a painful sadness, for his music sometimes discouraged one's soul terribly, especially when he improvised, he would suddenly, as if to take away the impression and remembrance of his sorrow from others and from himself, turn stealthily to the glass, arrange his hair and his cravat, and show

imself suddenly transformed into a phlegmatic Englishman, into an impertinent old man, into a entimental and ridiculous Englishwoman, into a ordid Jew. The types were always sad, however omical they might be, but perfectly conceived and o delicately rendered that one could not grow weary f admiring them.

"All these sublime, charming, or *bizarre* things hat he knew how to evolve out of himself made im the soul of select society, and there was literally contest for his company, his noble character, his lisinterestedness, his self-respect, his proper pride, enemy of every vanity of bad taste and of every nsolent *réclame*, the security of intercourse with im, and the exquisite delicacy of his manners, naking him a friend equally serious and agreeable."

George Sand, too, gives an admirable account of Chopin's travail of composition, which incidentally llustrates the service to his art of her sympathetic omradeship :

"His creation was spontaneous and miraculous. He found it without seeking it, without foreseeing t. It came on his piano suddenly, complete, ublime, or it sang in his head during a walk, and he vas impatient to play it to himself. But then egan the most heart-rending labour I ever saw. t was a series of efforts, of irresolutions, and of rettings to seize again certain details of the theme e had heard ; what he had conceived as a whole he nalyzed too much when wishing to write it, and his

regret at not finding it again, in his opinion, clearly defined, threw him into a kind of despair. He shut himself up in his room for whole days, weeping, walking, breaking his pens, repeating and altering a bar a hundred times, writing and effacing it as many times, and recommencing the next day with a minute and desperate perseverance. He spent six weeks over a single page, to write it at last as he had noted it down at the very first.

"I had for a long time been able to make him consent to trust to this first inspiration. But when he was no longer disposed to believe me, he reproached me gently with having spoiled him and with not being severe enough for him. I tried to amuse him, to take him out for walks. Sometimes taking away all my brood in a country *char à bancs* I dragged him away in spite of himself from this agony. I took him to the banks of the Creuse, and after being for two or three days lost amid sunshine and rain in frightful roads, we arrived, cheerful and famished, at some magnificently situated place where he seemed to revive. These fatigues knocked him up for the first day, but he slept. The last day he was quite revived, quite rejuvenated in returning to Nohant, and he found the solution of his work without too much effort; but it was not always possible to prevail upon him to leave that piano which was much oftener his torment than his joy and by degrees he showed temper when I disturbed him. I dared not insist. Chopin when angry was

larming, and as, with me, he always restrained himself, he seemed almost to choke and die."

I must make room for one or two glimpses of the summer life at Nohant, brilliant as it must have been with the associated gifts of the many clever and charming people for ever coming and going. Writes Charles Rollinat, a friend of George Sand's :

"The hospitality there was comfortable, and the freedom absolute. There were guns and dogs for those who loved hunting, boats and nets for those who loved fishing, a splendid garden to walk in. Every one did as he liked. Liszt and Chopin composed ; Pauline Garcia studied her *rôle* of the *Prophète ;* the mistress of the house wrote a romance or a drama ; and it was the same with the others. At six o'clock they assembled again to dine, and did not part company till two or three o'clock in the morning. Chopin rarely played. He could only be prevailed upon to play when he was sure of perfection. Nothing in the world would have made him consent to play indifferently. Liszt, on the contrary, played always, well or badly."

Chopin, in some of his gayer moods, would invent a pantomime, and improvise at the piano to the antics of the various performers. Says George Sand :

"The whole thing began by pantomime, and this was of Chopin's invention ; he occupied the place at the piano and improvised, while the young people gesticulated scenes and danced comic ballets.

. . . He led them as he pleased and made ther pass, according to his fancy, from the droll to th severe, from the burlesque to the solemn, from th graceful to the passionate. We improvised costume in order to play successively several *rôles*. As soo as the artist saw them appear, he adapted his them and his accent in a marvellous manner to thei respective characters. This went on for thre evenings, and then the master, setting out for Pari left us thoroughly stirred up, enthusiastic, an determined not to suffer the spark which ha electrified us to be lost."

Here is another glimpse given by the grea painter, Eugène Delacroix :

"The place is very pleasant, and the hosts d their utmost to please me. When we are n assembled to dine, breakfast, play at billiards, walk, we are in our rooms, reading, or resting on ou sofas. Now and then there come to you throug the window opening on the garden whiffs of th music of Chopin, who is working in his room ; th mingles with the song of the nightingales and th odour of the roses. You see that so far I am n much to be pitied, and, nevertheless, work mu come to give the grain of salt to all this. This li is too easy, I must purchase it with a little rackin of my brains ; and, like the huntsman who eats wi more appetite when he has got his skin torn bushes, one must strive a little after ideas in ord to feel the charm of doing nothing."

Such was this famous love-affair, or sentimental comradeship, such its even, unsensational tenor. For ten years it lasted, a long life for any heart relationship; and then, probably in June, 1847, came the end, suddenly for the spectator, but perhaps, for some time previous, anticipated by George Sand. Various versions are given of the incidental cause, but the probability is that, on George Sand's side at all events, its emotional vitality had died out, and that she had grown tired of her "detestable patient," with his wayward moods and his perpetual drain on her consideration. She writes thus of the rupture to her friend Charles Poncy, whose wife is the "Désirez" referred to:

"You have understood, Désirez and you, you whose soul is delicate because it is ardent, that I passed through the gravest and most painful phase of my life. I nearly succumbed, although I had foreseen it for a long time. But you know one is not always under the pressure of a sinister foresight, however evident it may be. There are days, weeks, entire months even, when one lives on illusions, and when one flatters one's self one is turning aside the blow which threatens one. At last, the most probable misfortune always surprises us disarmed and unprepared. In addition to this development of the unhappy germ, which was going on unnoticed, there have arisen several very bitter and altogether unexpected accessory circumstances. The result is that I am broken in soul and body with chagrin.

I believe that this chagrin is incurable; for the better I succeed in freeing myself from it for some hours, the more sombre and poignant does it re-enter into me in the following hours. . . ."

The "several very bitter and altogether unexpected accessory circumstances" referred to are variously given by various acquaintance. Some attributed the separation to Chopin's anger at what he, and others, considered a caricature of him as "Prince Karol" in George Sand's novel of "Lucrezia Floriani." Others hint that she was jealous of her own daughter Solange, whose marriage with the sculptor Clésinger Chopin is said to have violently opposed—though this latter statement does not seem compatible with the better authenticated story that, shortly after their marriage George Sand had quarrelled with her daughter and son-in-law and turned them both out of the Nohant house, writing to Chopin at the time forbidding him to receive them in Paris. On receiving this command of his mistress, Chopin had turned to his friend Franchomme, and said, "They have only me, and should I close my door upon them? No, I shall not do it!" "And he did not do it," adds Franchomme, "and yet he knew that this creature whom he adored would not forgive it him. Poor friend, how I have seen him suffer!"

And George Sand did not forgive him. Niecks accepts this incident as the final determining cause, but considers that the end had been for some time

on the way, and that Liszt has accurately expressed the psychology of the situation in this passage :

" These commencements, of which Madame de Staël spoke [*en amour, il n'y a que des commencemens*], had already for a long time been exhausted between the Polish artist and the French poet. They had only survived with the one by a violent effort of respect for the ideal which he had gilded with its fatal brilliancy ; with the other by a false shame which sophisticated on the pretension to preserve constancy in fidelity. The time came when this factitious existence, which succeeded no longer in galvanizing fibres dried up under the eyes of the spiritualistic artist, seemed to him to surpass what honour permitted him not to perceive. No one knew what was the cause or the pretext of the sudden rupture ; one saw only that after a violent opposition to the marriage of the daughter of the house, Chopin abruptly left Nohant never to return again."

However it had come about, the end had come, and George Sand and Chopin met but once again, and then but for an agitated moment in the *salon* of a friend. " I held his hand," wrote George Sand of the occasion, " trembling and cold as ice. I wished to speak to him, but he escaped me." And that was all. Chopin's life, too, was near its end. He had always been superstitious, we are told, in regard to the number seven, would not have taken a house which bore the number seven, or set out on

a journey on a date including the number. He ha
met George Sand in a year including the fat
number (1837), had parted from her in a yea
similarly inauspicious (1847), and the date of h
death was to include a seven—being October 1
1849. It seems certain that George Sand was muc
in his thoughts in his closing hours, for, as has bee
said above, two days before the end, he turne
to his friend Franchomme with the words, "She ha
said to me that I would die in no arms but hers
Once more evidence conflicts as to whether or n
George Sand attempted to fulfil this promise. On
version goes that she sent some one to inquire aft
him, being too occupied with the production of
new play to come herself; another that she d
actually come, but was dissuaded by those
attendance, one of those being her own daught
Solange. One prefers to believe the kinder versio
which seems more likely to be true, and to be mo
in keeping with George Sand's character, whic
whatever its faults, was generous and the reverse
unforgiving. That character has perhaps nev
had full justice done to it, and in regard to h
relations with Chopin too many critics have be
all too ready to believe the worst. That she shou
tire of him, however painfully it may have affect
him, was surely not a crime. "The world takes
for granted," says Niecks, with welcome comm
sense, "that the wife or paramour of a man
genius is in duty bound to sacrifice herself for hi

But how does the matter stand when there is genius on both sides, and self-sacrifice of either party entails loss to the world? By the way, is it not very selfish and hypocritical of this world which generally does so little for men of genius to demand that women shall entirely, self-denyingly devote themselves to their gifted lovers? Well, both George Sand and Chopin had to do work worth doing, and, if one of them was hampered by the other in doing it, the dissolution of the union was justified."

Actually, it seems to me that George Sand gave more to Chopin than she ever received in return. With her own burden of genius to carry, she attempted lovingly and faithfully to carry his too, through ten of the most fruitful years of his life; and we who care nowadays more for his music than for her books should gratefully remember this to her everlasting credit.

XI

MICHAEL ANGELO AND VITTORIA COLONNA

SOPHOCLES is credited by Plato with the saying, in regard to the fading of the passions with the advance of age, that it is "like being set free from service to a band of madmen." This saying fitly comes to mind with the mention of the names of Michael Angelo and Vittoria Colonna, for it is the significance of the legend which thus links their names together that it is the record of a feeling, an impassioned friendship, which could only have been experienced by two who had arrived at that tranquil period of life when, freed from the turmoil of the senses, it is first possible to realize a love, the ardours of which shall be purely of the spirit. The character of Michael Angelo's work, the cosmic austerity of the beauty that informs it—a beauty such as Wordsworth saw upon the face of Duty—

> "Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
> And the most ancient Heavens, through thee, are fresh and strong"

does not suggest him as ever, at any time during his long life, having been a votary of any goddess mor

uxurious than the Uranian Aphrodite. Perhaps n the mysterious economy of Providence, it was he fist of his fellow-pupil Torrigiano, breaking his ıose, that early day in the Medici gardens, that ɔrotected him by the disfigurement of which he vas lifelong sensitive, and preserved his passionate ense of beauty from the wasteful diffusion of ight loves. Not improbably, too, his grave, am-ɔitious boyhood had come under the influence of he Platonic ideal of beauty, as he could have heard t expounded any day by the humanist Marsilio Ficino at the learned reunions in his patron's mansion. On one of these occasions he may well have had his feet set upon that ladder of ideal Love, which Plato so vividly pictures in "The Sym-posium": "beginning from these beautiful objects here below ever to be going up higher, with that ɔther beauty in view; using them as steps of a ladder; mounting from the love of one fair person to the love of two; and from the love of two to the love of all; and from the love of beautiful persons to the love of beautiful employments, and from the love of beautiful employments to the love of beautiful kinds of knowledge; till he passes from degrees of knowledge to that knowledge which is the knowledge of nothing else save the absolute Beauty itself, and knows it at length as in itself it really is."

Dante, too, and Savonarola were the stern mentors of his young manhood, as their spirit and teachings

continued to sustain him throughout the whole o his lonely and turbulent existence. It is true tha in his later years he hints remorsefully at "con fusions of a wasted youth," and that some of hi sonnets and madrigals are unplatonically warm i colouring; yet austere old age is apt thus retro spectively to indulge in fanciful repentance, and i is probable that the poetry thus warmly coloure was addressed to no specific individuals, bu followed the poetic fashion of the time, in thus con cretely embodying abstract ideas and enthusiasms Passionate worshipper of physical beauty as Michae Angelo's work proves him to have been, the spiri in which he worshipped it is shown by that ver work to have been that of one for whom visibl beauty was first and last the sacramental symbol o the invisible eternal beauty; and, whether o not his life had known infidelities to his ideal, th loftiness of that ideal is not to be questioned Nor, outside the negligible innuendoes of the vil Pietro Aretino, was any found to speak ill of hi personal life. On the contrary, the testimon is all of the tenor of the annalist Ammirato, who under the year 1564, writes: "Buonarroti havin lived for ninety years, there was never foun through all that length of time, and with all tha liberty to sin, anyone who could with right an justice impute to him a stain or any ugliness o manners." The testimony of his beloved pupil an biographer, Condivi, is to the same effect. "Ofter

imes have I heard Michaelangelo discoursing nd expounding on the theme of love, and have fterwards gathered from those who were present pon these occasions that he spoke precisely as Plato vrote—I am sure, too, that no vile thoughts were orn in him, by this token, that he loved not only he beauty of human beings, but in general all fair hings, as a beautiful horse, a beautiful dog, a eautiful piece of country, a beautiful plant, a eautiful mountain, a beautiful wood, and every ite or thing in its kind fair and rare, admiring them with marvellous affection."

Indeed, one of his most beautiful sonnets might well be regarded as a commentary upon the passage of Plato above quoted :

"I saw no mortal beauty with these eyes
When perfect peace in thy fair eyes I found ;
But far within, where all is holy ground,
My soul felt Love, her comrade of the skies :
For she was born with God in Paradise ;
Else should we still to transient loves be bound ;
But, finding these so false, we pass beyond
Unto the Love of Loves that never dies.
Nay, things that die cannot assuage the thirst
Of souls undying ; nor Eternity
Serves Time, where all must fade that flourisheth.
Sense is not love, but lawlessness accurst :
This kills the soul ; while our love lifts on high
Our friends on earth—higher in heaven through death."

When, or to whom, this sonnet was written we have no record. It may well have been written to Vittoria Colonna, but, whether or not, it faithfully represents the quality of the only "love" for a

woman which is known to have entered into the lif
of the apocalyptic creator of sibyls and demi-gods.

Vittoria Colonna, indeed, in character and b
reason of all the circumstances of her life, seems
so to say, Michaelangelesque in stature and genera
impressiveness, an heroic figure of a woman
filled with the large spirit of his own creations
Princess of one of the proudest families of Italy
illustrious for beauty and learning, a poet whom
Ariosto had praised, a great lady who united all th
brilliance of this world with a picturesque piety
romantic both by personality and position, lit to
by the stormy and sorrowful lights of her ow
history and that of her house, just then at a tragi
turn of its fortunes, her figure stands out wit
more than individual significance, a veritable siby
of the Renaissance. Married at nineteen to th
Marchese di Pescara, she had, in her passionat
devotion for him, known all of love in the earthl
sense she was to know. Early left a widow, he
sorrow had made her a poet and turned her though
to God—so seriously that Pope Clement VI
had to prevent her by force from taking the veil.
is impossible to name with certainty the year i
which Vittoria Colonna and Michael Angelo fir
met. In 1534, on the death of Clement VII
Michael Angelo had left Florence for ever, an
taken up his residence in Rome. If then, as seem
most probable, he had not made Vittoria's acquain
ance during previous visits there, it seems hard

oubtful that he must now have done so, and have aturally been offered a distinguished welcome in iat circle of philosophers and literati which it as the widowed Marchesa's pleasure to gather out her in the cloistered retirement of her Roman illa.

Michael Angelo was then fifty-nine years old, ittoria forty-four, and one immediate bond of mpathy between the two would be their common terest in religious matters, particularly the reform f the Church, a restoration of it to evangelical urity, that "reformation from within" the leading pirits of which, before long to be crushed by the atholic reaction as embodied in the Inquisition, ere Vittoria's most intimate friends. These iendships were later on to bring Vittoria herself ito grave danger, from which only her rank rotected her; but, meanwhile, the reforming arty was powerful and the pious reunions at the illa Colonna were left in peace. There exists a ery charming description of one of these reunions the reminiscences of the miniature-painter rancisco d'Ollanda, who resided in Rome during ie year 1530 and 1540, on an artistic mission from is master the King of Portugal. Francisco was *ersona grata* in Vittoria's circle, and he gives so ving a picture of the gracious way of life of that oble lady as he recalls her one Sunday afternoon the spring of 1537, seated in the quiet little con- ent church of San Silvestro on Monte Cavallo, in

the company of Michael Angelo and others, listenin
to an exposition of St. Paul's epistles by a famou
divine of her own persuasion, that I wish it wer
possible to quote the whole. One or two extract
however, will convey some of the beautiful cal
of that far-away afternoon.

The church still stands, and one may sti
trace the path up the hillside through the Colonn
gardens so often taken by Vittoria in search
contemplation and spiritual intercourse with th
quiet sisters, she herself hardly less a nun tha
they. Francisco tells how, on that particul
afternoon, calling at the house of his frien
Lattanzio Tolomei, he had found a message left f
him to the effect that Tolomei had accompanie
the Marchesa to the church of San Silvestr
for the purpose of hearing Brother Ambrose
Siena discourse upon Saint Paul. Francisco w
invited to follow on. "And so," writes Francisc
"I started off for San Silvestro. Vittoria Colonn
the Marchesa di Pescara, and sister of Ascan
Colonna, is one of the noblest and most famo
women in Italy, and in the whole world. She
beautiful, pure in conduct, and acquainted with t
Latin tongue; in short, she is adorned with eve
grace which can redound to a woman's prai
Weary of the brilliant life which she formerly le
she has quite devoted herself, since the death of h
husband, to thoughts on Christ and to study; s
supports the needy of her sex, and stands forth a

model of genuine Catholic piety. She was the intimate friend of Tolomei, and I owe her acquaintance to him.

"I entered: they asked me to take a place, and the reading and exposition of the Epistles were continued. When it was ended the Marchesa spoke; and, looking at me and Tolomei, she said, 'I am not quite wrong if I imagine that Messer Francisco would rather listen to Michael Angelo upon painting than Fra Ambrosio upon the Pauline Epistles.'"

This was a playful dig at Francisco, as he was well known among his acquaintance for the assiduity with which he button-holed Michael Angelo on all occasions, perhaps, as he himself half hints, somewhat to the great man's weariness. The Marchesa followed up her suggestion, by calling one of her retinue:

"'Do you know Michael Angelo's dwelling? Go, and tell him that I and Messer Tolomei are here in the chapel, where it is beautifully cool—the church, too, is private and agreeable; and that I beg to ask him whether he is inclined to lose a few hours here in our society, and to turn them into gain for us. But not a word that the gentleman from Spain is here.'

"I could not refrain from remarking, in a low tone, to Tolomei, with what art the Marchesa knew how to treat the slightest thing. She inquired what we were saying. 'Oh!' answered Tolomei, 'he said with what wisdom Your Excellency

went to work even in so trifling a message. For, a
Michael Angelo knows, that, when he once meet
Messer Francisco, there is no possibility of separat-
ing : he avoids him wherever he can.'

"'I have remarked it,' said the Marchesa; '
know Michael Angelo. But it will be difficult t
bring him to speak on painting. . . .'

"The Marchesa and Tolomei laughed. Afte
some moments, in which neither of them spoke, w
heard knocking at the door. Every one feared tha
it could not be Michael Angelo, who lived dow
below on Monte Cavallo. Fortunately, however, th
servant met him close by San Silvestro, and he wa
just on the point of going to the Thermal. He wa
coming up the Esquiline Way, in conversation wit
his colour-grinder, Urbino ; he fell at once into th
snare, and it was he who knocked at the door.

"The Marchesa rose to receive him, and remaine
standing some time until she had made him take
place between herself and Tolomei. I now als
seated myself at a little distance from them. A
first they were silent ; then, however, the Marchesa
who could never speak without elevating thos
with whom she conversed and even the place wher
she was, began to lead the conversation with th
greatest art upon all possible things, without, how
ever, touching even remotely upon painting. Sh
wished to give Michael Angelo assurance. Sh
proceeded as if approaching an unassailable fortres
so long as he was on his guard. But at last h

elded. 'It is an old experience,' she said, 'that
o one can rise against Michael Angelo, who would
ntend against him with his own weapons; that
with mind and art. And so you will see there is
nly one means of having the last word with him;
nd that is to speak of lawsuits or painting, and he
all not say a word more.'

"'Or rather,' I now remarked from my corner,
he very best means of wearying Michael Angelo
ut would be simply to let him know that I am
ere; for he has not seen me up to this moment.
f course, the surest means of concealing from him
nything as unimportant as I am was to come close
nder his eyes.'

"'Pardon, Messer Francisco,' he called out,
urning with astonishment to me, 'it was impossible
o see you. I saw no one here but the Marchesa.
ut, since you are providentially there, come as a
olleague to my help. . . .'

"'His Holiness,' said the Marchesa, again re-
ewing the conversation, 'has had the goodness to
rant me permission to build a new convent in this
nmediate neighbourhood, half-way up Monte
avallo, where the tower stands from which Nero
ooked down on the burning city. The footsteps
f pious women are to efface the traces of the
icked. I don't know, Michael Angelo, how I shall
ave the building erected—how large, and facing
hich side. The old wall, perhaps, might still be
nployed.'

" ' Certainly,' he replied : ' the old tower migh hold the bells. I see no difficulty in this building We would, if Your Excellency likes, take a view o the place on the way home.'

" ' I had not ventured to ask this,' answered she ' but I see the words of our Lord, " Every one tha exalteth himself shall be abased, and he tha humbleth himself shall be exalted," are truer unde all circumstances. But you understand how to giv conscientiously where others only lavish at random and therefore your friends rank yourself so muc higher than your works ; and those who onl know your works and not yourself value that i you which can be only called perfect on a lowe scale. I cannot but admire the manner in whic you withdraw yourself from the world, from usele conversation, and from all the offers of princes, wh desire paintings from your hand—how you avoi it all, and how you have disposed the labour o your whole life as one single great work.'

" ' Gracious lady,' replied Michael Angelo, ' the are undeserved praises ; but, as the conversatio has taken this turn, I must here complain of th public. A thousand silly reproaches are brough against artists of importance. They say that the are strange people, that they are not to be ap proached, that there is no bearing with them. N one, on the contrary, can be so natural and huma as great artists.' "

How clearly, as in a painting, the vario

ersonalities come before us in this delightful ialogue, and how naturally the whole atmosphere, ven the tones of the voices are conveyed to us, and ne very accent of the courtly affectionate intimacy etween the two illustrious friends, so marked on ach side with a sort of tender reverence, involun-arily caught. It seems evident that they must ave been familiar friends for some time, and from ther references it is certain that they had been in orrespondence, before Vittoria's final settlement in ome, during her frequent absences on her estates t Ischia, or in conventual retirement at Orvieto nd Viterbo. Some years after her death, Michael ngelo writes of his being in possession of many tters written to him by her from those cities, ogether with a parchment volume of one hundred nd forty-three sonnets which she had from time to ime given or sent to him. Of their correspondence ut six letters remain, two from Michael Angelo and our from Vittoria, and the first of these is dated s late as 1545. This is from Michael Angelo, ritten in response to certain poems for which he esires to make some return.

"I desired, lady," the letter runs, "before I ccepted the things which your ladyship has often xpressed the will to give me—I desired to produce omething for you with my own hand, in order to e as little as possible unworthy of this kindness. have now come to recognize that the grace of God s not to be bought, and that to keep it waiting is a

grievous sin. Therefore I acknowledge my error and willingly accept your favours. When I posses them, not indeed because I shall have them in my house, but for that I myself shall dwell in them the place will seem to encircle me with Paradise For which felicity I shall remain evermore obliged to your ladyship than I am already, if that is possible The bearer of this letter will be Urbino, who live in my service. Your ladyship may inform hin when you would like me to come and see the head you promised to show me."

The letter was accompanied by a sonnet, ex pressing the same diffidence.

"Seeking at least to be not all unfit
For thy sublime and boundless courtesy,
My lowly thoughts at first were fain to try
What they could yield for grace so infinite.
But now I know my unassisted wit
Is all too weak to make me soar so high,
For pardon, lady, for this fault I cry,
And wiser still I grow remembering it.
Yea, well I see what folly 'twere to think
That largess dropped from thee like dews from heaven
Could e'er be paid by work so frail as mine!
To nothingness my art and talent sink;
He fails who from his mortal stores hath given
A thousandfold to match one gift divine."

Michael Angelo's biographer, Condivi, speaks o two drawings made by his master for Vittoria, one "Pieta" representing Christ being taken from th Cross by two angels in the presence of His mothe and one a Crucifixion. Both designs have been pr served, and the sketch by the latter, now at Oxfor

s supposed to be the original. It is of this that Michael Angelo writes in his other surviving letter :

"LADY MARCHIONESS :—

"Being myself in Rome, I thought it hardly itting to give the crucified Christ to Messer Tommaso, and to make him an intermediary etween your ladyship and me, your servant ; es- ecially because it has been my earnest wish to erform more for you than for anyone I ever knew pon the world. But absorbing occupations, vhich still engage me, have prevented my informing our ladyship of this. Moreover, knowing that ou know that love needs no taskmaster, and hat he who loves doth not sleep, I thought the ess of using go-betweens. And though I seem o have forgotten, I was doing what I did not talk bout in order to effect a thing that was not looked or. My purpose has been spoiled : *He sins who faith like this so soon forgets.*"

Mr. Symonds prints in connection with this etter the following sonnet which may well have ccompanied it :

"Blest spirit, who with loving tenderness
Quickenest my heart, so old and near to die,
Who 'mid thy joys on me dost bend an eye,
Though many nobler men around thee press !
As thou wert erewhile wont my sight to bless,
So to console my mind thou now dost fly ;
Hope therefore stills the pangs of memory,
Which, coupled with desire, my soul distress.
So finding in thee grace to plead for me—
Thy thoughts for me sunk in so sad a case—

He who now writes returns thee thanks for these.
Lo! it were foul and monstrous usury
To send thee ugliest paintings in the place
Of thy fair spirit's living phantasies."

The letters from Vittoria are in acknowledgmen of the two sketches, and the first is probably a acknowledgment of the letter from Michael Angel last quoted.

"Unique Master Michelangelo, and my mo singular friend," it runs, "I have received yo letter, and examined the crucifix, which tru hath crucified in my memory every other pictu I ever saw. Nowhere could one find another figu of our Lord so well executed, so living, and exquisitely finished. Certes, I cannot express words how subtly and marvellously it is designe Wherefore I am resolved to take the work as comi from no other hand but yours, and according I beg you to assure me whether this really is yo or another's. Excuse the question. If it is you I must possess it under any conditions. In ca it is not yours, and you want to have it carried o by your assistant, we will talk the matter over firs I know how extremely difficult it would be to co it, and therefore I would rather let him fini something else than this. But if it be in fa yours, rest assured, and make the best of it, that will never come again into your keeping. I ha examined it minutely in full light and by the le and mirror, and never saw anything more perfe

"Yours to command,

"The Marchioness of Pescara."

The meaning, so tacitly conveyed, seems to be hat Michael Angelo had merely sent his sketch or her approval, intending to have it executed by ne of his workmen, but that Vittoria valued it too nuch to allow it again out of her hands, delicately inting that no hand but the master's own could afely be entrusted to model it.

A second letter refers to the drawing of Christ ipon the Cross supported by two angels:

"Your works forcibly stimulate the judgment of all who look at them. My study of them made me speak of adding goodness to things perfect in themselves, and I have seen now that 'all is possible to him who believes.' I had the greatest faith in God that He would bestow upon you supernatural grace for the making of this Christ. When I came to examine it, I found it so marvellous that it surpasses all my expectations. Wherefore, emboldened by your miracles, I conceived a great desire for that which I now see marvellously accomplished. I mean that the design is in all parts perfect and consummate, and one could not desire more, nor could desire attain to demanding so much. I tell you that I am mighty pleased that the angel on the right hand is by far the fairer, since Michael will place you, Michaelangelo, upon the right hand of our Lord at that last day. Meanwhile, I do not know how else to serve you than by making orisons to this sweet Christ, whom you have drawn so well and exquisitely, and praying you to hold me yours to command as yours in all and for all."

From the following brief note it would appe that Michael Angelo had taken his friend's hi and set to work to model the crucifix :

" I beg you to let me have the crucifix a sho while in my keeping, even though it be unfinishe I want to show it to some gentlemen who ha come from the Most Reverend the Cardinal Mantua. If you are not working, will you not cor to-day at your leisure and talk with me ?

" Yours to command,

" The Marchioness of Pescara."

The one other letter of Vittoria that remains to strikes a more personal note than the rest. It evident that, during Vittoria's absence in Viterb Michael Angelo's letters had been enthusiastica frequent, and it is possible even that the gen rebuke given here with such playful tact—revealin as did Francisco's picture of her in the conve chapel, an attractive archness of humour amo Vittoria's other qualities—was directed against growing ardour of tone in her correspondenc though this in a man past seventy is surely i probable. But here is the letter :

" Magnificent Messer Michelangelo :—

" I did not reply earlier to your letter, becau it was, as one might say, an answer to my la for I thought that if you and I were to go on writi without intermission according to my obligati

d your courtesy, I should have to neglect the hapel of S. Catherine here, and be absent at the pointed hours for company with my sisterhood, ıile you would have to leave the Chapel of S. ul, and be absent from morning through the y from your sweet usual colloquy with painted rms, the which with their natural accents do not eak to you less clearly than the living persons und me speak to me. Thus we should both of us il in our duty, I to the brides, you to the vicar of hrist. For these reasons, inasmuch as I am well sured of our steadfast friendship and firm affection, ound by knots of Christian kindness, I do not think necessary to obtain the proof of your good-will letters by writing on my side, but rather to await ith well-prepared mind some substantial occasion r serving you. Meanwhile I address my prayers that Lord of whom you spoke to me with so rvent and humble a heart when I left Rome, at when I return thither I may find you with His nage renewed and enlivened by true faith in your ul, in like measure as you have painted it with erfect art in my Samaritan. Believe me to remain ways yours and your Urbino's."

Though, as has been said, Michael Angelo's age ems to preclude such warmth of feeling as, it is ssible, Vittoria discourages in this letter, yet it ust not be forgotten that age in a great artist a very different thing, retains more essential uthfulness, than age in ordinary cases; for a elong preoccupation with beautiful forms and

ideal interests does unquestionably make for pr
longed youth of the whole nature. Browni
and Tennyson wrote love-poetry till the la
and we have not considered it strange in ther
and "age," which was capable of expressing itself
the giant energy of a "Last Judgment" needs sor
other name. Therefore, the essential platonis
of Michael Angelo's feeling for Vittoria may ha
exhibited in its expression a somewhat more th
platonic fire, and there is one sonnet that mig
so be interpreted, a sonnet which, though it is n
known to have been addressed to Vittoria, can hard
have been meant for anyone else :

"What though long waiting wins more happiness
Than petulant desire is wont to gain,
My luck in latest age hath brought me pain,
Thinking how brief must be an old man's bliss.
Heaven, if it heed our lives, can hardly bless
This fire of love when frosts are wont to reign :
For so I love thee, lady, and my strain
Of tears through age exceeds in tenderness.
Yet peradventure though my day is done,—
Though nearly past the setting 'mid thick cloud
And frozen exhalations sinks my sun,—
If love to only midday be allowed,
And I an old man in my evening burn,
You, lady, still my night to noon may turn."

In addition to the two sonnets quoted in c
nection with his letters, there are but two otl
which are known with certainty to have been
dressed to Vittoria. The first has reference

ittoria's chastening influence over "the fierce eat" of his stormy passionate nature:

"When divine Art conceives a form and face,
She bids the craftsman for his first essay
To shape a simple model in mere clay:
This is the earliest birth of Art's embrace.
From the live marble in the second place
His mallet brings into the light of day
A thing so beautiful that who can say
When time shall conquer that immortal grace?
Thus my own model I was born to be—
The model of that nobler self, whereto
Schooled by your pity, lady, I shall grow;
Each overplus and each deficiency
You will make good. What penance then is due
For my fierce heat, chastened and taught by you?"

he second

"He who is bound by some great benefit,
As to be raised from death to life again,
How shall he recompense that gift, or gain
Freedom from servitude so infinite?
Yet if 'twere possible to pay the debt,
He'd lose that kindness which we entertain
For those who serve us well; since it is plain
That kindness needs some boon to quicken it.
Wherefore, O lady, to maintain thy grace,
So far above my fortune, what I bring
Is rather thanklessness than courtesy:
For if both met as equals face to face,
She whom I love could not be called my king:—
There is no lordship in equality."

There remains one madrigal evidently written to ittoria during her lifetime, in which, lamenting he vacillations of his soul in search of truth, now to the right, now to the left hand driven," both vice and virtue" making appeal to his

perplexed heart, he once more seeks her spiritu guidance :

> "I send you paper, beg you take a quill,
> And with your sacred ink
> Make love give light, and mercy truth impart ;
> So that my soul, delivered, purged of ill,
> Shall not be drawn to error's brink,
> Through life's brief remnant, by a blinded heart."

Such is all that remains of the written intercour of these two who were lovers in the high sen that both loved God and sought Him togethe becoming mutually dear one to the other by fello ship in that thrilling quest. Vittoria was not f from the end of her pilgrimage when these lin were written, and her death in 1547, she bei fifty-seven, and Michael Angelo seventy, seems have plunged her forsaken friend in grief unco trollable as it was deep. He appears to have be at her side at the last, and his disciple Condi records that " he, for his part, loved her so, that remember to have heard him say that he regrett nothing except that when he went to visit her up the moment of her passage from this life, he did n kiss her forehead or her face, as he did kiss her han Her death was the cause that oftentimes he dw astonied, thinking of it, even as a man bereft sense." Michael Angelo himself, writing i mediately after her death, says, " She felt t warmest affection for me, and I not less for h Death has robbed me of a great friend." M Symonds has pointed out as curious that he h

es the masculine gender : "*un grande amico.*" is grief found expression also in sonnets and adrigals, in one of which he speaks of her as the ulptor of his soul, which by her death is thus left nfinished :

"When my rude hammer to the stubborn stone
Gives human shape, now that, now this, at will,
Following his hand who wields and guides it still,
It moves upon another's feet alone :
But that which dwells in heaven, the world doth fill
With beauty by pure motions of its own ;
And since tools fashion tools which else where none,
Its life makes all that lives with living skill.
Now, for that every stroke excels the more
The higher at the forge it doth ascend,
Her soul that fashioned mine hath sought the skies :
Wherefore unfinished I must meet my end,
If God, the great artificer, denies
That aid which was unique on earth before."

And again, in these forceful lines, he pays tribute her regenerating power over his spirit :

"A man within a woman, nay, a god,
Speaks through her spoken word :
I therefore, who have heard,
Must suffer change, and shall be mine no more.
She lured me from the paths I whilom trod.
Borne from my former state by her away,
I stand aloof, and mine own self deplore.
Above all vain desire
The beauty of her face doth lift my clay ;
All lesser loveliness seems charnel mire.
O lady, who through fire
And water leadest souls to joys eterne,
Let me no more unto myself return."

Vittoria's life had ended under the shadow of a eat sorrow, little less than the downfall of the

great house of Colonna, which in its struggle wit its papal rivals the Farnese found itself finall worsted. The castles of the Colonna were seize and Vittoria, herself under the surveillance of th Holy Office, retired to the Benedictine Convent o St. Anne dei Funari (now Dei Falegnami), whe she remained till her death.

Michael Angelo is supposed to have sketched h during these last sad years, and the portrait of h which survives, with the mark of his pupil Marcel Venusti upon it, is judged to have been mere coloured by that artist. Grimm, who says, " believe none other but Michael Angelo could th have represented Vittoria," gives this vivid descri tion of the portrait : " We have before us an ag woman. There is no longer the fair hair, whi once invested her with such charm : a whit widow's veil, brought low down upon her bro envelops her head, and falls over her bosom a shoulders. A tall figure, dressed in black velv upright, and sitting without support on a cha the circular, simply formed back of which is grasp in front by her right hand, while the other is lyi on an open book in her lap. There is a gra repose in her features, a slightly painful compressi about the eyes and mouth. She appears aged, b not decrepit ; and the deep lines which fate h drawn are noble and energetic."

Michael Angelo was to survive his friend f twenty years, years in which he was still to produ

me of his finest drawings; but, great as his tistic activity continued to be, his soul withdrew elf more and more into that life of religious con- mplation in which, though separated from her in ace and time, he must have felt himself growing er nearer to his "comrade of the skies."

XII

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI AND ELIZABETH SIDDAL

TO come near to a legend in the making, wit the creative "wonder not yet quite gone from the mythopœic process, to catch glimpse of the very process by which an actu personal history becomes a universal symbol—tha in a peculiar degree, one is able to do in conten plating the love-story of Dante Gabriel Rossetti ar Elizabeth Siddal. The famous lovers of old-tin have so long been "enskied and sainted" in the hig heaven of romance that, however authentic the earthly histories, it is difficult to conceive of the having actually lived and loved in the same huma world as ourselves. They are too far off for us think of them otherwise than as dream-figures in dream-world; and, though we know, for exampl that in the very flesh Dante and Beatrice once gaz at each other in the streets of Florence, though w know the very year and day and street, yet no doc ments, no pious pilgrimage of Florence streets c make their story seem other than a dream. Th are as real to us as Romeo and Juliet, but no mo

ıl—realities of the imagination. Realities of the agination also, by the power of their love and the ıgic of Rossetti's genius have these two of whom have to write already become; but, as yet, we e near enough to them to see them before they ape entirely into mythology; to catch a glimpse, repeat, of the process by which the mortal puts immortality, the actual personal history becomes universal symbol.

It seems not unlikely that the two mystical faces at look out most constantly from Rossetti's nvasses will haunt the imagination of mankind in ıe same manner as the classic faces of other painters ımortally haunt it—the women of Leonardo, ɔtticelli, Gainsborough, Reynolds. Already such ces as "Beata Beatrix" and "Pandora" have ng since become as the faces of legend; and deed, almost at their first revelation to the world, had seemed impossible that they could be other an the faces of a dream, with such an atmosphere glamour had the painter invested them, with ch an intensity of spiritual impressiveness. Yet one of these two wonderful faces the present iter has been privileged to look in the actual ght of the common day, and many live still whose es have beheld the other, as Elizabeth Siddal as first made known to him, the history of whose nius came to be the history of her face.

I suppose that no moment or period of time, owever poetic in the retrospect, has ever seemed

poetic at the moment; those who lived in particularly the young people, have, no doubt, be conscious only of its prose, and it has seemed in possible that anything romantic could be happeni just then. The age of marvels is always past, possibly to come—but never now. So it seems 1911, and so, no doubt, it seemed in 1850, a ye indeed which has been pilloried as the very cu minating moment of mid-Victorian mediocri and materialism. Yet the world has perhaps seldo had so many remarkable people in it at one time so it seems to us now, looking back—and not sin the Renaissance, perhaps, has there been a period big with new creative forces, so rich in what one m call prophetic personalities.

One of the most potent of those prophe personalities was surely Dante Gabriel Rosset then twenty-two, but already, four years since, t poet of "The Blessed Damosel," the most master of a little group of dreaming young painters, alrea knocking loudly at the academic doors in the na of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, founded 1848, and busily at work in shattering to bits t smug scheme of things about them and remouldi it nearer to the heart's desire; daring archite of a magical new Palace of Art, and creators of su an Earthly Paradise of beauty and dream as h never before existed on English ground—a pal and a paradise that remain for us and for the futu and shall for ever give sanctuary and refreshm

› the human spirit. Beauty, always religious in its ıtensest manifestations, has never perhaps come to s as so veritably a religion as in the poetry and ainting we call Pre-Raphaelite. These young oets and painters are priests as well, priests of a ew religion of beauty, of which Keats was the ›nely prophet, when, as a voice crying in the ilderness, he proclaimed the oneness of beauty nd truth, and if Rossetti was the high priest of his religion, as beyond all question he was, Elizabeth iddal was its young Madonna.

How strange it is to think that, if, some sixty-one ears ago, one had stepped into a bonnet-shop in ranborne Alley, Leicester Square, one could have een this future Madonna, a grave, stately, beautiful irl, going about her daily tasks, busied among ›onnets and bonnet-boxes, and, no doubt, with a ertain disdain, which seems to have been character-stic of her, waiting on the humours of bourgeois ustomers who saw nothing in her but a milliner's ssistant insufficiently humble. Fateful moment for ossetti and the art of the future was that day in 850 when one of these feminine customers stepped nto the little shop, accompanied by one with an ye for beauty rather than bonnets, her handsome on, Walter Deverell, an enthusiastic young painter losely affiliated with the brotherhood, and on erms of cordial companionship with Rossetti.)ne can imagine the young man's enthusiasm t the discovery of this beautiful unknown face,

there, as it were, in hiding in the purlieus o Leicester Square. We can see young Devere imploring his mother to ask the proud girl if sh would sit for her artist son, and one can imagin the eagerness with which, the permission given, h would hasten to rhapsodize with his fellow-painte on his fairy-tale discovery. Soon the beautiful fac was to begin its romantic history as one of Shake speare's dream-women, Viola, in Deverell's paintin of "Viola listening to the Court Minstrels," i which picture Rossetti is one of her companion as the jester. Then Holman Hunt was to paint he as Sylvia in "The Two Gentlemen of Verona, and again, another of the brotherhood, Millais, i still another Shakespearean character, his famou drowning Ophelia. But her face was to belong t none of these painters, for very soon Rossetti ha claimed and won it for his own :

"Let all men note
That in all years (O Love, thy gift is this!)
They that would look on her must come to me."

So far, his sister Christina had been his model. is her sorrow-dedicated face that looks out fro "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin," and "Th Annunciation," the two notable firstfruits of h art; but, from now on, it is the face of Elizabe Siddal that, for him,

"Like a governing star,
Gathers and garners from all things that are
Their silent penetrative loveliness."

is her beauty, even when the face is the face of other model, that suffuses all his work, that auty through which that high revelation had been ade to him—" the worship of that Love through ee made known "—for which he strove ever ter in picture and poem to find thrilling and llowed and lovely expression.

As one stands hushed before the spiritual ecstasy the " Beata Beatrix," or ponders the mystical ssion of " The House of Life "—that chapel of eautiful words built by Rossetti to house the emory of his late " espousèd saint "—does it not uicken one's sense of the spiritual values of human perience to recall in contrast that little bonnet-op near Leicester Square and the beautiful illiner's assistant, so little aware of the romantic estiny already on its way to her, so little suspecting ie transcendental meaning her beauty is one day have for the whole world and the future days.

One naturally asks : How did that beauty affect her observers ? What was Elizabeth Siddal tually like, as seen in the every day, untransfigured love or genius ? Rossetti's brother and bio-apher, William Michael, is at hand with this aracteristically minute description of her. " She as," he says, " a most beautiful creature, with an r between dignity and sweetness, mixed with some-ing which exceeded modest self-respect, and rtook of disdainful reserve ; tall, finely formed, ith a lofty neck, and regular yet somewhat

uncommon features, greenish-blue unsparkling eyes large perfect eyelids, brilliant complexion, and lavish heavy wealth of coppery-golden hair. I was what many people call red hair, and abuse unde that name—but the colour, when not rank an flagrant, happens to have been always much admire by Dante Rossetti. Her voice was clear and low but with a certain sibilant tendency which reduce its attractiveness. . . ."

This is a description of her at the time o Rossetti's first meeting her, when she was scarcel seventeen years old; but I think that a descriptio made by Lady Burne-Jones much later, when sh had become Rossetti's wife, gives a more realizable as certainly a very sympathetic, picture of her. Th Burne-Joneses had been on a visit to the Rossett at some lodgings in Hampstead.

"I see her," writes Lady Burne-Jones, "in th little upstairs bedroom, with its lattice window, t which she carried me when we arrived, and th mass of her beautiful deep-red hair as she took o her bonnet: she wore her hair very loosely fastene up, so that it fell in soft, heavy wings. Her com plexion looked as if a rose tint lay beneath the whi skin, producing a most soft and delicate pink f the darkest flesh-tones. Her eyes were of a kind golden brown—agate colour is the only word I ca think of to describe them—and wonderfully lumi ous: in all Gabriel's drawings of her, and in th type she created in his mind, this is to be seen. Th

elids were deep, but without any languor or owsiness, and had the peculiarity of seeming arcely to veil the light in her eyes when she was oking down."

It will be observed that the two descriptions ffer as to the colour of the eyes. "Greenish-blue nsparkling eyes," says her brother-in-law; "a nd of golden brown," says Lady Burne-Jones, lding, "agate colour," which is hardly the same ing, though it reinforces the "unsparkling" of the rst description.

Rossetti himself, in one of the sonnets of "The ouse of Life," writes of: "Thine eyes gray-lit in adowing hair above." Evidently, part of the eauty of the eyes he loved was their quality of nigmatic sea-like changefulness, as also that abracted, impenetrable gaze which dominates her ce in the portrait painted by herself. That ortrait is declared by William Michael Rossetti to e "an absolute likeness," and, writing of it to Iadox Brown in 1853, Dante Gabriel enthusitically says: "Lizzie has made a perfect wonder her portrait, which is nearly done, and which I ink we shall send to the winter exhibition." From is it will be gathered that Miss Siddal possessed her natural gifts besides her beauty. Indeed, r gift for painting must have been very conderable, none the less so because it appears to ve remained unrevealed till her chance introducon into that world of eager young artists, the

atmosphere of which must have been charged wi contagious aspiration. Naturally, Rossetti was h master, for such training as she had, as her work some measure reflected his mood and manne though it seems to have had no little personal for and quality, an ingenuity and grace of romant invention in particular. "Her fecundity of i vention," writes Rossetti, "and facility are qui wonderful—much greater than mine." "This comments his brother, "may have been a love exaggeration, but it was not mere nonsense Surely not, as it is easy to judge by looking at th portrait of herself, to be found reproduced in t Rossetti memoir. She was but twenty when s painted it, and to have achieved so much maste in three years—during which Rossetti had be continually painting and drawing her with t ardent worship of a lover—indicates exceptio natural powers. Her favourite subjects were tak from romantic poetry, such as Wordsworth's "W are Seven," Browning's "Pippa Passes," Tenn son's "Eve of St. Agnes," the old ballad of "S Patrick Spens"; and, as we shall see presently, s had the further gift of a certain sad poetry herse

One of the prettiest passages in Miss Sidda short life is Ruskin's affectionate interest in her a her work. Rossetti had taken her to visit the Rusk family one day in April, 1855, and thus writes Madox Brown of the impression she had made.

"All the Ruskins were most delighted wi

uggum," he says—one likes to think of "Beata eatrix" as "Guggum" too!—"John Ruskin said e was a noble, glorious creature, and his father id by her look and manner she might have been countess." Ruskin had already some two or three ars before launched his famous and most helpful anifesto in favour of the Pre-Raphaelites, and he id also made Rossetti's future particularly his care generously undertaking to buy all the young ainter's work that was to his taste, thus providing n art likely in its beginning to find little financial ncouragement with a sustaining market. Now, vidently taking a fatherly interest in the love of ne two young people, he proposed to buy Miss iddal's work also, arranging to pay her an annual um (a hundred and fifty pounds) and leaving her o produce her drawings at leisure. This arrangeent lasted for two or three years, and seems only o have lapsed because Miss Siddal's frail health had ot allowed her to work with any regularity. Yes! hat complexion which "looked," as Lady Burnenes had said, as "if a rose tint lay beneath the hite skin," was all too ominous of the physical agility which too often lurks beneath such fairness. he shadow of consumption was over this beauty, nd the fear of death became early the companion f love in Rossetti's heart. Very soon doctors and recautionary "changes of air," and actual illness, nter into the story, saddening even to despair ossetti's letters to his family and friends; and this

sad poem, entitled "A Year and a Day," to which
referred above is painful evidence—in the almo
physical weariness of the verses—how sick the writ
felt herself to be :

"Slow days have passed that make a year,
Slow hours that make a day,
Since I could take my first dear love,
And kiss him the old way:
Yet the green leaves touch me on the cheek,
Dear Christ, this month of May.

"I lie among the tall green grass
That bends above my head,
And covers up my wasted face,
And folds me in its bed
Tenderly and lovingly
Like grass above the dead.

"Dim phantoms of an unknown ill
Float through my tiring brain;
The unformed visions of my life
Pass by in ghostly train;
Some pause to touch me on the cheek,
Some scatter tears like rain.

"The river ever running down
Between its grassy bed,
The voices of a thousand birds
That clang above my head,
Shall bring to me a sadder dream
When this sad dream is dead.

"A silence falls upon my heart,
And hushes all its pain.
I stretch my hands in the long grass,
And fall to sleep again,
There to lie empty of all love,
Like beaten corn of grain."

Poor girl! one involuntarily exclaims—the poe
is so expressively weighted with the helpless lassitu

a life felt to be fading away, which it pictures th such pathetic simplicity and even detail. It s this precarious health, combined with the ıcertainty of Rossetti's financial resources, that counts for the strangely long-drawn lapse of time tween the engagement of the two young people, thin a few months after their meeting in 1850, and eir marriage at last in 1860, ten years after. Yet is delay would, doubtless, press less hardly upon em than upon lovers in a more formal social ıvironment; the world they belonged to was an tistic world favourable to a human freedom of tercourse, a little world, too, of friends all intiately associated in their work and dreams, a udio-restaurant life, paying little heed to conentions or domesticities, and thus we may think of ıose ten years as years of happy comradeship, of ursuits shared together, and work done side by de, with all the passionate zest, and sympathetic ısion, of young romantic lives. But illness, too, ften marred this happy intercourse, and spells of grew more frequent as the years went on, too ften taking "Lizzie" away from London in arch of more clement air. Too often the poet had o console himself with the philosophy of a Parted Presence," and the haunting "Song of ıe Bower" is the poignant record of one of these parations more than usually prolonged:

> "Say, is it day, is it dusk in thy bower,
> Thou whom I long for, who longest for me?"

During these years Rossetti had been fitfull producing some of his most characteristic worl both in painting and poetry, and, though h employed other models as well, "Lizzie" wa constantly his sitter. It is her face we find in th dream-wrought triptych of "Paolo and Francesca, as she is always the Beatrice in his numerou pictures from Dante—the earliest of which was th "Beatrice at a Marriage Feast denies Dante he Salutation." The very first picture in which sh appears was a little water-colour, called "Rossc vestita" (Redclad), made in the year of the meeting, and the last time Rossetti was to paint he a few days before her death, was as the Prince Sabra in the water-colour of "St. George and th Dragon." "Ida" was one of Ruskin's names fo her, and, in a letter congratulating them on the marriage, he thus testifies to what he considers he influence upon her husband's art. "I think," h writes, "Ida should be very happy to see how muc more beautifully, perfectly, and tenderly you dra when you are drawing her than when you dra anybody else. She cures you of all your wor faults when you only look at her." Seldom, indee has a man's genius been so inspired and determine throughout by one passionate dream as that Rossetti. In this he and his great master and nam sake are spiritual brothers, for each it was the or first pure love of youth that, invisible as visibl whatever external incognities their lives may he

d there present, that made for them their vision
the world, and star-like, shone on them from
ginning to end of their mystic pilgrimage.
ɔssetti's youth had been singularly pure. He had,
e are told, "no juvenile amours, liaisons, or
rtations." Elizabeth Siddal was his first love—
d from that fact comes surely that atmosphere
hushed wonder, that awe of virgin passion, that
nse of trance-like rapture and worship, that
eathes through all his work, picture or poem, a
uality to be found elsewhere in literature in but
ıe book—that "Vita Nuova," his translation of
hich was, for the most part, one of the masterly
hievements of his marvellous boyhood.

After ten years of a love thus vitally sacramental
ıd a comradeship so complete, their formal
arriage seems a comparatively minor detail; but
took place at last on May 23, 1860, at St. Clement's
hurch, Hastings, whither "Lizzie," with her lover
companion and nurse, had gone for the sea air.
ill the last moment it had looked as if it must still
e deferred. So miserable was his sweetheart's
ealth that Rossetti had feared that she might not
e able "to enter the cold church with safety."
ı a letter to his mother, he seems to reproach
mself for the long anterior delay: "Like all the
ıportant things I ever meant to do—to fulfil duty
secure happiness—this one has been deferred
most beyond possibility. I have hardly deserved
at "Lizzie" should still consent to it, but she has

done so, and I trust I may still have time to pro my thankfulness to her."

In this the meaning of the last verse of "T Song of the Bower" :

> "Shall I not one day remember thy bower,
> One day when all days are one day to me?—
> Thinking, 'I stirred not, and yet had the power,'
> Yearning, 'Ah God, if again it might be!'"

But it is the truest love that is apt, on occasio to be thus self-reproachful, and at all events "t hour for which the years did sigh" had come at la Paris had previously proved favourable to his wif health, so it was thither they set off to spend th honeymoon. "Lizzie's" health did actually i prove and the holiday passed happily in visiti galleries and looking up old friends. Rossetti a did some work, turning again to an old fancy of h and completing the strangely fascinating lit drawing, "How They Met Themselves." In t drawing, it will be remembered, two lovers walk together in a dark wood are represented as meet face to face their wraiths similarly walking togeth A ghostly light surrounds the phantom forms, a the living woman is represented as swooning at lover's side. Certainly this was an uncanny, omened theme to treat at such a time, with shadow of "Lizzie's" illness still over them, no little superstitious as Rossetti is said to have be But it was the kind of fancy they both delighted and the newly made wife seems to have had

isgivings as to being the model. The swooning rl is said by Mr. W. M. Rossetti to be " very like er." One is reminded of Rossetti's treatment of a milar theme in a water-colour called " Bonifazio's listress," which represents a girl dying while tting for her portrait to her lover—the proposed ading of his unfinished story, " St. Agnes of ntercession." To have been thus regardless of mens, one may conclude that the lovers were eling very secure in their new happiness, and that aris had put Rossetti's fears for his wife's health momentarily at rest. She was but scarcely twenty-even, he thirty-two. Life may well have seemed air and full of romantic promise as they returned o London, and took it up together in their pleasant tudio in Chatham Place, near Blackfriars Bridge, vith the motley river traffic of the Thames for icturesque outlook at their window.

> " A little while a little love
> The hour yet bears for thee and me. . . ."

When Rossetti wrote that I do not know—it tands next to " The Song of the Bower " in his oems—but he may well have gone with its aledictory refrain singing in his heart during the months that followed ; for love's hours were all too urely numbered. His wife's spurt of renewed ealth was not long maintained, and now to her hthisical weakness was added a wearing neuralgia vhich necessitated recourse to laudanum for its elief. Her constant sickness was the more cruel,

for the life of their little circle was daily growi
fuller in interest and success. In 1861 Rossett
translations from "The Early Italian Poets" w
published and the epoch-making decorative fir
of "Morris Marshall, Falkner & Co." was i
augurated. They were stirring days for the fo
friendly households, the Burne-Joneses, the Morris
the Madox Browns, and the Rossettis; and Swi
burne, one of their nearest friends, was in the fi
splendid spring of his powers. It must have be
hard to have been ill with such a creative ferme
about one; and to this constant suffering was to
added the sharp sorrow, a year after their marriag
of a still-born child. From this blow and
attendant illness the failing wife seems to ha
rapidly recovered, but the neuralgia remained, a
the laudanum bottle. Rossetti had been led
Ruskin to take an interest in a certain Worki
Men's College, and there occasionally he still co
ducted a drawing class. On the evening of Februa
10, 1862, he was due at one of these classes, b
before going there, he had taken his wife to dine
company with Swinburne at the Sablonière Ho
in Leicester Square — that little bonnet-shop
sacred memory, it may be recalled, this night of
nights, not far away! After dinner, during whi
"Lizzie" had been bright and animated, Rosse
had taken her home, and gone on to his drawi
class. He returned shortly after eleven to find
wife insensible, and at her bedside an emp

idanum bottle. Four doctors did all there was to done, but in vain, and at twenty minutes past ven the following morning she died.

Realizing what a tragic significance that moment Elizabeth Rossetti's death was to have for ture time, it is strange to read the contemporary wspaper account of it as given in Mr. W. M. ssetti's memoir. It is evident that Rossetti's was ll an unknown name to the public at large. Little d the reporter realize what sacred, historical aterial he was dealing with when, as part of his y's work, he thus wrote of the "Death of a Lady om an Overdose of Laudanum": "On Thursday r. Payne held an inquest at Bridewell Hospital on e body of Eliza Eleanor Rossetti, aged twenty-ne, wife of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Artist, of No. Chatham Place, Blackfriars, who came to her ath under very melancholy circumstances. Mr. ssetti stated that on Monday afternoon, between and seven o'clock, he and his wife went out in e carriage for the purpose of dining with a friend the Sablonière Hotel, Leicester Square, when ey had got about half-way there his wife appeared be very drowsy, and he wished her to return. She jected to their doing so, and they proceeded to e hotel, and dined there. They returned home eight o'clock, when she appeared somewhat cited. He left home again at nine o'clock, his fe being then about to go to bed. On his return half-past eleven o'clock he found his wife in bed,

utterly unconscious. She was in the habit of takir laudanum, and he had known her to take as much 100 drops at a time, and he thought she ha been taking it before they went out. He foun a phial on a table at the bedside, which had co tained laudanum, but it was then empty. A doct was sent for, and promptly attended. She ha expressed no wish to die, but quite the revers Indeed she contemplated going out of town in day or two, and had ordered a new mantle whi she intended wearing on the occasion. He believ she took the laudanum to soothe her nerves. S could not sleep or take food unless she used it. D Hutchinson, of Bridge Street, Blackfriars, said had attended the deceased in her confinement April with a still-born child. He saw her on Mond night at half-past eleven o'clock, and found her in comatose state. He tried to rouse her, but cou not, and then tried the stomach-pump witho avail. He injected several quarts of water into t stomach, and washed it out, when the smell laudanum was very distinct. He and three oth medical gentlemen stayed with her all night, a she died at twenty minutes past seven o'clock Tuesday morning. The jury returned a verdict Accidental Death."

The ever-helpful Ford Madox Brown had co to his friend's side on that dark morning, a William Michael Rossetti had touchingly writt in his diary :

"The poor thing looks wonderfully calm now and
:autiful."

> "Ed avea in se umilita si verace
> Che parea che dicesse, Jo sono in pace."
> (And with her was such very humbleness
> That she appeared to say, I am at peace).

"I could not but think of that all the time I
oked at her, it is so exactly like."

As his wife lay thus at peace, Rossetti's grief
rompted an act of singular elegiac loveliness,
)mantically impressive with the solemn poetry of
eath. Between her cheek and her beautiful hair
e laid the manuscript volume of his poems, the only
)py of them in the world. The loveliest had been
ritten for her. They had no meaning but their
)ve, and now they had no life for him apart from
er. They belonged immortally to her—the last
ost precious gift he could bring. It was fitting
iat she should take them with her, that his heart
ould thus lie beside her in the grave. What had
e to do with poetry any more!

Was there ever a scene more thrilling to the
nagination, with the mysterious glamour, the terrible
ar-like music of death? Only, it would seem, when
)ve and death thus meet together in the death-
iamber of a poet's heart do we know the tragic
eaning of the strange word Life. There is no
:corded act of love more symbolic of the very
eart of love than this gift of Rossetti's to his dead
ife—a gift in later years only seemingly taken

back, and actually, so to say, but momentari borrowed, to the end that he might further enric it, make it the more immortally hers.

A touch of self-reproach may seem to hav entered into this sacrifice. "I have often," he sai to Madox Brown, "been writing at those poen when Lizzie was ill and suffering, and I might hav been attending to her, and now they shall go." Bu deep grief is ever thus self-reproachful. The always seems something undone that we might hav done for the dead we love. It is the deepest lov that is ever thus retrospectively scrupulous an self-torturing, and it would be unjust to Rosset to allow too much weight to such words spoken such an hour. No human love is quite perfect, an in its own heart-love the most pure and devote will always be conscious of shortcoming in this an that. It is by the whole history of a feeling that must be judged, not by a small failure here an there; and so judged, who can study Rossetti paintings and poems without realizing that his lov for Elizabeth Siddal was, not only the one passio but the enduring religion of his life, a religion whic gives his work an unusual sacramental significanc the importance of a spiritual message:

> "Yea, in God's name, and Love's, and thine would I
> Draw from one loving heart such evidence
> As to all hearts all things shall signify. . . ."

These lines were certainly among the poe that lay between her hair and her cheek, that s

ɔrning ; and, though she had left him thus early continue the rest of his journey alone, all his bsequent work was to be the fulfilment of this uthful ideal : " and to this end," he might have d, with Dante at the bier of Beatrice, " is all my iving, as she well knoweth."

Three other lines from that same sonnet must ve come home to him with terrible truth, as he ɔod hushed at the side of her marble peace :

> " Lady, I fain would tell how evermore
> Thy soul I know not from thy body, nor
> Thee from myself, neither our love from God."

There, rightly understood, is the mystical message all his work, the apprehension of visible beauty the key to, the " signature " of, the invisible, the ansfiguration of the senses by the soul, " the eaning of all things that are " revealed in one autiful, beloved face, and in the love of one fair eting form the divination of the celestial love thout beginning and without end.

For us here it is not necessary to pursue the story Rossetti's after-life, sick and haunted as in later ars it was to become—

> " A thicket hung with masks of mockery
> And watered with the wasteful warmth of tears ; "

d yet, for all its " soul-struck widowhood," so ırred with momentous and enduring achievement. ur concern has been with that human love-story, nich, from now on, could only be continued in the

poet's soul, with the successive creations of
genius for its subsequent history ; that history to
in masterpieces of poem or painting, in " The Hou
of Life," in " Dante's Dream," in which Rosse
immortalized and universalized that hour of
wife's loss in one superb symbol of tragic sorro
that picture so strangely charged with the enchant
hush, the dark magnificence, and the regal beau
of death ; in " Beata Beatrix," where we see t
other side of the bitterness of death, and enter wi
the parting soul that spiritual ecstasy of rebir
into another plane of being which is one concepti
of our mortal change. It is said that in painti
" Beata Beatrix" Rossetti allowed himself to rec
his wife's face for the first time after her death, a
of it he himself has said that it is " not intended
all to represent death, but to render it under t
resemblance of a trance in which . . . she
suddenly rapt from earth to heaven."

When Rossetti painted this, the inevitable p
cesses of grief had brought him to that m
peaceful mood in which he could conceive of dea
the infant child Life had brought him, as " fu
grown the helpful daughter of my heart," and
his hand in hers not without hope that she
leading him through " the devious coverts of c
may," and the dolorous paths of " Willowwoo
back to the lost face and the one dream :

" When vain desire at last and vain regret
Go hand in hand to death, and all is vain,

What shall assuage the unforgotten pain
And teach the unforgetful to forget?
Shall Peace be still a sunk stream long unmet—
Or may the soul at once in a green plain
Stoop through the spray of some sweet life-fountain
And cull the dew-drenched flowering amulet?

"Ah! when the wan soul in that golden air
Between the scriptured petals softly blown
Peers breathless for the gift of grace unknown—
Ah! let none other alien spell soe'er
But only the one Hope's one name be there—
Not less nor more, but even that word alone."

XIII

MARY STUART AND PIERRE CHASTELAR

THEIR far-reaching political consequenc have given a prominence to two of Quee Mary's love-affairs out of proportion their genuine romantic qualities. Rizzio and th blood-stained floor at Holyrood, Bothwell and th Casket Letters, have occupied our imaginations the forefront of the story to the semi-oblivion other names more truly deserving the tragic laur which was Mary's one invariable gift to her lover the names of men who loved her with no *arrièr pensée* of selfish ambition, men whose eyes we less on her crown than on her fair, disastrous fac glorious madmen who loved that face as men love the moon, fated servitors of *la belle dame sans mer*

Modern historical criticism has sadly tarnish the Rizzio and Bothwell legends. Nowadays w think less of the decorative Italian artist and h chamber music, and more of the rather elderl somewhat fattish, Italian secretary, deep in politic intrigue and perilous foreign correspondence, o jectionably familiar in manner with his roy mistress, and exasperatingly upstart in his gener

ys. We have rather ceased, I think, to blame rnley for his murder, and began to wonder that was let live so long. As to Bothwell, seeing so arly the cold, self-seeking, and brutal common- ss of the man, we have lost all patience with ary for wrecking her fortunes on so coarse a bully, d her disordered infatuation seems to belong less poetry than to disagreeable pathology. Rizzio d Bothwell are only romantic by position, by eir relation to the dramatic disposition of events, d by association with the romantic personality of ary, as vulgar objects grow poetic in the moon- ght. Those other wearers of Mary's tragic laurel, wever, are essentially romantic, by the fire and e purity of their devotion, as well.

Such was that young Lord John Gordon who was be the first, literally, to lose his head over Mary, on after her arrival in Scotland. There were any to say that she had smiled over kindly on the ndsome youth, with such potent magic indeed at, when she had committed him to Edinburgh stle, for his truculent swordsmanship in the city eets, he had not only broken his word, but dared gather his clansmen about him and plan her duction. For this he was to mount the scaffold, d Mary, not without tears, but without mercy, s to see him die. With the dream still in his eyes, called to her, before the axe fell : " Most lovely, t most cruel of her sex ! "

Happier than he, perhaps the happiest of all

Mary's minor lovers, was young George Dougla the gallant lad of eighteen, who managed h escape from Lochleven Castle. Him she ha even expressed a wish to marry. She had said s frankly to Murray, the Regent, on one of his visits t his precarious prisoner, young George being th Regent's brother, and at that time an inmate o the castle, his mother Lady Douglas and anothe brother, Sir William Douglas, being the Queen gaolers. The immediate result of Mary's franl ness was to banish George Douglas from the castle only, however, that he should the more activel plan Mary's escape. A few weeks later it was h loving arms that carried his Queen ashore from th darkling boat, and set her on his waiting horse- proud and happy George Douglas, riding by h side through the rushing night. Nearly twent years later another gallant moth was to hurl him self into the magic dazzle, young English Anthon Babington, who was found ready to murder h Queen for Mary's sake, and so passes in his drea to Tower Hill. And to these might be added oth names, humbler lovers still, who had been eager t dare all and lose all for a smile from those strang eyes, a touch of that too thoughtlessly caressin hand. Ah! those soft, bird-like ways of hers, tho artless arts of casual tenderness so easy to mistak that made all her slaves, and drove some mad.

"I know how folk would gibe
If one of us pushed courtesy so far,"

ys one of her four "Maries," in Swinburne's neyed play, striving to tell where lay her mis-ess's all-conquering charm :

"She has always loved love's fashions well; you wot,
The marshal, head friend of this Chastelard's,
She used to talk with ere he brought her here
And sow their talk with little kisses thick
As roses in rose-harvest. For myself,
I cannot see which side of her that lurks
Which snares in such wise all the sense of men ;
What special beauty, subtle as man's eye
And tender as the inside of the eyelid is,
There grows about her."

o Mary Hamilton, but Mary Carmichael deems it her way of talking :

"I think her cunning speech—
The soft and rapid shudder of her breath
In talking—the rare tender little laugh—
The pitiful sweet sound like a bird's sigh
When her voice breaks; her talking does it all."

ut Mary Seyton will have the charm is in her es :

"I say, her eyes with those clear perfect brows :
It is the playing of those eyelashes,
The lure of amorous looks as sad as love,
Plucks all souls toward her like a net."

So a poet strives to formulate a fascination hich Mary's portraits only hint at, but fall short conveying; a gift of personal enchantment which even her enemies bore witness, but which, hile all could praise, none could with exactness nalyse. After naming this feature and that

characteristic, the last secret still escapes them as perhaps it always does in the beauty that ha done the most divine damage in the world—fo the essence of a spell is its mystery, and wizardr knows no why or wherefore. Plain miracle is alik the only explanation of a rose, or of a "tragi Mary"; and plain madness is perhaps the mos logical worship of such beauty. Divine beauty divine madness, divine death! Such, at all event would seem to have been the desperate logic of tha other quite unpolitic lover of the Queen, Pierre d Boscobel de Chastelard, gentleman of Dauphin descendant of Bayard, and poet of the *Pléiade*.

Outside Mr. Swinburne's noble tragedy, Chaste lard's divine madness—his really fine frenzy—ha not, it seems to me, received its fair due at the hand of romance, not to speak of history. History, indeed has treated Chastelard as a crazy fribble, much i the spirit of Hamlet's manner towards Osric "Dost know this water-fly?"—and romance ha seemed scarcely aware of his existence. Th egregious S. W. H. Ireland, of the famous "Irelan forgeries," attempted in Chastelard's name on more mystification of the guileless public of 180 with a nauseous confection entitled "Effusion of Love from Chatelar to Mary Queen of Scotland-Translated from a Gallic manuscript in the Scotc College at Paris. Interspersed with songs, sonne and notes explanatory—by the Translator." On would need the command of that explosive

lysyllabic literary Billingsgate which Swinburne ployed in a very ecstasy of vituperative mud-rowing to characterize the unimaginable silliness Ireland's production. Merely as a literary riosity, one may quote a typical passage—the ghfalutin of a "man of feeling" in 1805. atelar, so called, is represented as having stolen ary's rosary. These are his sublime raptures over treasure :

"This rosary was the theft of love—surely 'tis rgiven. I stole the secret moment, and in the sence of my love, I made myself possessor of ese beads unseen. Heavenly powers! they were ary's, her ivory fingers with love-thrilling uch, have pressed these little amber studs! her s! love, love, omniscient love! her lips too have sed them! Come, come to mine—thus—and us—and thus I scent their fragrance, and I suck eir sweets! Oh! balmy essence! nectareous ce! tinged with the vermeil dye of those moist bies, which, moving, utter dulcet music, and pense around the violet's rich perfume. O outh more exquisite than fragrant May! more cious than the honey bee's rich store! Thus, us, I taste thee!"

Even Mr. Maurice Hewlett, friendly by nature to phuistic forms of gallantry, declines the oppor-nity, in his brilliant "The Queen's Quair," to ve poor Chastelard a chance with posterity;

though he admits that he died like a gentlema
which, after all, is an epitaph worth dying for.
glittering gentleman of France, the perfectio
possibly the exaggeration, of the sworded butterf
type characteristic of the Renaissance, Chastela
undoubtedly was; one whose fine clothes a
posturing elegancies of speech and manners, a
the satin and sugar and general high-flown dandyis
of him, masked the genuine virility and strength
soul not infrequently to be found beneath suc
externals in those days; when life, so stern at cor
went so often in such fantastic masquerade. Sure
to those sour Scotch eyes that so grimly watche
the landing of all those "French popinjays," th
heart-sick, misty morning of Mary's first arrival
Leith, he may well have seemed the very personific
tion of those "Babylonian" iniquities so u
pleasing to the godly Mr. Knox, the very prince
that papistical company of "skippers and dance
and dalliers with dames."

Let us pause a moment to indulge our mode
sympathy—a sympathy which history has insuf
ciently bestowed—with that shivering chapfall
company of exquisites newly come from singi
France over the weary sea, so laughably out
place, so absurdly misunderstood, in this land
inhospitable rock and dripping mist, prison-li
houses, funereal costumes, rawbones, sour fac
and harsh, outlandish speech. Well might the lit
Queen cry herself to sleep, looking her last—h

ral last, poor Mary—on laughing France: "Fare-
'l, beloved France, I shall never, never see you
re!" as movingly described by Brantôme, who
s one of the many illustrious French "dancing-
sters"—otherwise the fine flower of the chivalry
l culture of France—that formed Mary's brilliant
te. No less than three of her uncles of the
loubtable house of Guise, the Duc d'Aumale, the
rquis d'Elbœuf, and the Grand Prior, were of
s company, preposterously regarded by these
ercilious hyperborean saints as though they were
roupe of strolling players, not to speak of some
score noble French gentlemen, amongst them
chief ornaments of the Court of the Louvre;
l that "garden of girls," the four Maries, her
mortal maids of honour.

To our eyes that little fleet riding at anchor in
fog and drizzle of Leith harbour, with its
ange foreign sailors and its gay-garmented
rtly folk, trying to keep up their spirits with
f-frightened laughter—a snatch of flowery song
l a touched lute, maybe, here and there,
deepen the disapproving gaze of Scotch fish-
es and glooming zealots—seems a veritable
osy of romance; so much of vivid, forceful,
ed personality lay packed between its decks,
much brilliant human story, so much of the
utiful tragic stuff of life; strong men, fair
es, fluttering hearts, and plotting and dreaming
ins. One likes to think, too, of the priests with

their sacred vessels—be sure the grim folk asho thought of little but that! Mr. Knox's "idol the mass"—the musicians with their delica old-world instruments, their lutes and viols, the "citherns and citoles"; and a specially precio charge is in the keeping of grave Servais de Condé- no less than the library of the learned young Quee That library itself was to have a romantic histor probably the first library of any account, and sure of *belles-lettres*, ever housed in Scotland. A uncouth catalogue made by no sympathetic han years after, when Mary had fled to England, st exists and has been piously edited and annotat by a modern bibliophile.

It was a delightfully varied collection, co centrating every form of "sweet learning" de to the Renaissance. Though "the Decameron Bocas" was there, and many a quaint Arthuri romance, "The First Buik of Amades of Gaule "Two Volumes of Lancilot de Laik," "T First Buik of Rolland Amoreuse," and so fortl and though the "gay science" of the fashio able Ronsardist poetry is well represented, Pont de Tyard with his "Errores Amoreuses," I Bellay, and the master Ronsard himself—h own familiar friend—with an "Art Poetik French"—the library was by no means a frivolo one. "Vergilius" was there, and "The Fi Volume of Heros," likewise "Herodote," "T Symposie of Plato," and Marcus Aurelius in Italia

l there were weighty theological treatises which
. Scotch cataloguer must have taken up with a
r of tongs, such as "Ane Treatie of the Prémicie
the Peap," and "The Answer of Johnne Calvynis
istle," together with one volume which, doubtless,
approved, a translation of the Psalms, by her
tin Master—George Buchanan. Books of hunting,
game of chess, and "Thre Buikis of Musik"
rhaps Rizzio's) are found side by side with Saint
gustine, and lives of the saints. And there is one
ok absurdly catalogued as "Frenche Sonnattis in
itt," which may well have been a manuscript
ume of Chastelard's own poems. Such were the
umes that M. Servais de Condé had in keeping
tween decks, in fair bindings—Mary had probably
ught a taste for fine bindings from Diane de
ictiers—blazoned with her arms and those of her
ad boy-King Francis, for whom her tears were
rcely yet dried, and whom she had mourned in
etty pathetic verses of her own:

"Si en quelque séjour,
Soit en bois ou en prée,
Soit sur l'aube du jour,
Ou soit sur la vesprée,
Sans cesse mon cœur sent
Le regret d'un absent."

Brantôme tells us that during the voyage the
llant Chastelard had not feared to rally the Queen
her obstinate widowhood, and had written her a
nnet "*très bien faict*" in Italian, beginning "*Che*

giova posseder città e regni," of which the substan
was : " Of what use is it to possess widespreadi
domains, cities, crowns and bowing people, to
admired, respected, feared and gazed at, and
sleep alone in glacial widowhood ? " Brantô
evidently thought no little of Chastelard as a po
" He made many other very beautiful rhymes,"
says, " which I have read in his own handwriti
but they have never been printed, so far as I ha
seen."

He adds that the Queen, " who loved lett
and particularly rhymes, and sometimes ma
pretty ones herself," was much pleased w
Chastelard's poetry, and even wrote back ver
in reply, generally " making him good cheer
entertaining him." Brantôme has this furt
praise of Chastelard. " Chastelard," he sa
" was a knight of polished manners, as good
swordsman as he was good at letters. He was v
adroit with arms, and was expert in all manly sp
and exercises, such as fencing, tennis, jumping
dancing. In short, he was a very accomplis
gentleman ; and in spirit he was no less charm
he talked well, and wrote even better, and as
even in rhyme as any gentleman of France, mak
very sweet and graceful poetry with ease."

Chastelard's wit and gay spirits had evidently b
very welcome to Mary on that voyage dolor
to the customary hardships of which had b
added the fear of capture by Elizabeth's warsh

Brantôme records one high-flown conceit of his
ce gentil mot"—much, one can imagine, in his
al dandiacal manner. As, one evening, the
ors were lighting the ship's lanterns, the voice
Chastelard was heard declaring that there was
need of lantern or torch to light up the sea,
the beautiful eyes of the Queen were bright
ugh to illuminate, with their lovely fires, the wide
ers, and gave all the light he needed to see by.
There were other poets aboard to say similar
ty things to the Queen—Chastelard's own
ron, M. d'Amville, of the great house of Mont-
renci, for one—and then we hear, too, of five
olars" to make music. So, doubtless, these poor
nch butterflies contrived to keep up a certain
ty on the voyage, and the fog was interpreted
a providence as hiding them from the sea-dogs
Elizabeth. How Knox interpreted that fog
s interesting to recall. "The very face of the
vens," he says, "the time of her arrival, did
nifestly speak what comfort was brought unto
country with her, to wit, sorrow, darkness,
our, and all impiety; for, in the memory of man,
day of the year, was never seen a more dolorous
of the heaven than was at her arrival, which two
s after did so continue. . . . That fore-warning
e God unto us, but, alas, the most part were
d." So did the genial John read the celestial
s, and such in the main was the mood of welcome
iting Mary, and her "dames, damoisellis, and

maidinnis" ; though it is recorded that a cert
human element in the sermon-ridden populat
did its poor best to provide a serenade for the Qu
beneath her palace windows. The graceful a
however, might well be a little rusty in a city wh
a poor rascal had recently been hanged for "mak
a Robin Hood" (a sort of merry-England carn
mummery), and though John Knox speaks hig
of the entertainment—"a company," he says, '
most honest men with instruments of music,
with musicians, gave salutations at her cham
window"—Mary and her courtiers seem to h
held their ears. "There came under her windo
writes Brantôme, "five or six hundred ragamu
of that town, who gave her a concert of the vi
fiddles and little rebecs, which are as bad as t
can be in that country, and accompanied them v
singing of psalms, but so wretchedly out of t
that nothing could be worse. Ah! what melod
was! What a lullaby for the night!"

Mary, however, accepted the good intentions,
professed herself pleased; and, poor soul,
crudest attempt at anything so human as m
may well have been grateful to her in a pe
who, she was soon to find, were dourly on
watch to misinterpret the most innocent gaiet
"French" depravity. Alas for the "*joyeus*
in which, she wailed, she had been brought
"so termed she," Knox sourly explains, "
dancing, and other things thereto belonging."

here was, however, a wistful section of society
irk-ridden Edinburgh to whom Mary's advent
t have come like a burst of sunshine, youthful
s and ladies to whom the Queen's "French
kes and fiddlers" were anything but anathema;
one can imagine that the sojourn of Mary's
e French Court at Holyrood, with its con-
ent round of festivities, was an oasis of natural
in their bleak sermon-charged atmosphere.
nge, that such found more fun "in fiddling and
ing than in reading or hearing of God's most
sed word; and fiddlers and flatterers more
ious in their eyes than men of wisdom and
ity." Youthful levity incomprehensible to Knox
other "sober men," whose "wholesome ad-
ition" young Edinburgh, oddly enough, found
less attractive.

n the centre of this godless gaiety, one of the
t brilliant figures was our Chastelard, whose
s and graces had evidently by this time, from
report of various witnesses, made him somewhat
conspicuously *persona grata* with the heedlessly
onstrative Queen. Mary's indiscreet com-
sance seems to have turned the head of the in-
mable poet, who henceforth made no secret of
passion for the Queen. No doubt she discounted
raptures as the euphuistic exaggeration which
s were privileged to employ towards noble
es at that period, but Chastelard was to prove
n all too tragically, however idiotically, sincere.

When the time came for the French visitors return home, Chastelard, with lyrical reluctan accompanied his patron, the Maréchal d'Amvil but, before very long, he had found an excuse to back in Scotland once more. His family w Huguenot, but he had been brought up by Montmorencis, and, a religious war breaking out this time, Chastelard escaped from the dilemma having to choose sides between his co-religion and his patrons, by gaining permission for t timely absence in Scotland. Meanwhile, he had ceased to proclaim his hopeless love for the Qu in open talk as well as sugared sonnets, and, as passed through London on his way north, he coxcomb enough to boast that he was going Scotland " to see his lady love."

Mary seems to have received him with graciousness he was all too ready to misund stand. " He is well entertained, and hath gr confidence with the Queen," wrote Randol the English ambassador, to Cecil, " riding u the sorrel gelding that my Lord Robert (Stu gave her grace." Politicians had their eye the affair, as we shall presently see; and th were many to censure " the over-great familia that any such personage (as the Queen) show to so unworthy a creature and abject a varl We are told that he had on his first audie presented Mary with " a book of his own maki written in metre." This is probably those " Fren

:nattis in Writt" catalogued in Mary's library Holyrood. This book is no longer in existence, l little or nothing of Chastelard's poetry seems have found its way into print. Some few verses to be found in Le Laboureur's "Additions" to stelnau's "Memoirs," Castelnau having been , not the least brilliant, of Mary's escort to otland. Here are the first and last verses of a ient which may well have been written, with the ought of Mary:

"Antres prez, monts et plaines,
Rochers, forests, et bois,
Ruisseaux, fleuves, fontaines,
Où perdu je m'en vois:
D'une plainte incertaine
De sanglots toute pleine,
Je veux chanter,
La miserable peine
Qui me fait lamenter

"Ces buissons et ces arbres,
Qui sont entour de moy
Ces rochers et ces marbres
Sçavent bien mon émoy;
Bref, rien de la nature,
N'ignore ma blessure,
Fors seulement
Toy qui prens nourriture
En mon cruel tourment."

Chastelard was doubtless all the more welcome at urt for being Mary's one remaining link with that *oyeuseté*" of the Louvre for ever lost to her; and all events there seems to have been more godless *oyeuseté*" at Holyrood than ever during this

winter of his return in 1562; and Knox
not the only authority for the statement tha
Mary's manners towards the infatuated poe
were of a perilous familiarity and warmth. Kno
however, is always so piquantly trenchant in h
disapproval that he becomes attractive to quo
by his very vehemence. "Amongst the minio
of the court," he says, "there was one name
Monsieur Chatelet, a Frenchman, that at that tim
passed all others in credit with the Queen.
dancing of the purpose—so term they that danc
in the which man and woman talketh secretly
wise men would judge such fashions more like th
bordell than to the comeliness of honest wome
In this dance the Queen chose Chatelet, an
Chatelet took the Queen, for he had the best dre
All the winter Chatelet was so familiar in th
Queen's cabinet, early and late, that scarcely cou
any of the nobility have access unto her. The Que
would lie upon Chatelet's shoulder, and sometim
privily would steal a kiss of his neck. And all this
Knox adds with a fine snort, so to say, of indigna
scorn, "was honest enough; for it was the gen
entreatment of a stranger."

Whether or not these dances, of which Kn
has so much to say, really passed beyond decoru
is a doubtful question, but we may be very su
that a very little levity would go a long way wi
the great reformer—better versed in the wrath
come than in the pleasure fashions of the momen

d it is probable that Mrs. Oliphant comes near e truth when she says, commenting on this ssage: "Dancing was in those days the most corous of performances; but if Mary had been oved to have danced a stately *pas seul* in a inuet, it was to Knox, who knew no better, if she had indulged in the wildest bobbing of a untry fair—nay, he would probably have thought e high-skipping rural performance by far the ost innocent of the two."

Poor Mary's passion for dancing might almost be id to be a matter of international politics in those ays. Elizabeth, who was fond of it herself and alous of Mary's much limited charms and accomishments, had asked the opinion of the Scotch mbassador, Melville, as to which was the best dancer, erself or Mary. Melville had answered, with Scotch ution, that they danced differently. "The ueen Mary," he said, "danced not so high and sposedly" as Elizabeth did. Elizabeth, too, had ked if "his mistress played well." "Reasonably, a Queen," had been his answer.

Though Knox and other such severe onlookers oubtless exaggerated Mary's levity, and unjustly, ignorantly, put the worst construction upon it, ere seems to be no question that her "entertainent" of Chastelard was such as a man wildly in ve might too easily misunderstand and presume on, though, had his eyes been less drugged, he ight have noted that, in her moods of affectionate

expression, such favours as she showed him were somewhat indiscriminately lavished on all who pleased her, her young pages and her maids of honour alike. Mary, too, was unquestionably a born coquette, was avid of admiration, and unhappy unless she had every one around her in love with her unmindful of consequences. Chastelard, who had known her at the Court of France, should have been sufficiently forewarned against her "strange sof ways," but he had "kissed the sea-witch on her eyes" —"*La belle dame sans merci*" had him in thrall and he was determined to win all or lose all on on desperate cast. What Knox sarcastically calls Mary' "gentle entreatment of a stranger" had wrough such madness in him that, on the night o February 12, while Mary was in close conferenc with her Ministers, Murray and Lethington, h secreted himself, fully armed with sword an dagger, in the Queen's bedchamber. There, befor the Queen's retirement, he was discovered by he maids, who said nothing of his intrusion until th morning.

When Mary heard of it she angrily ordered hi from her presence, but apparently she must hav consented to overlook his offence, for he was allowe to follow the Court, when, later in the day, removed from Holyrood to St. Andrews. Alas Mary's clemency seems to have further misled th love-crazed poet, for on the following night h repeated the same egregious offence. This tim

t was not to be overlooked, for the Queen's cries of larm brought her attendants, followed presently y the grim Earl of Murray, all too glad, doubtless, n his heart to have such colourable matter against he Queen—who had cried out on him to plunge his agger in the intruder. But, according to Knox, is friend Murray was too God-fearing a man for uch summary work. He promised that Chastelard hould be brought to trial instead, and so the loomed poet, putting a gallant face on his tragic dilemma, was removed by the guards. Knox eems to have a sort of pity for "poor Chatelet," s he calls him, but perhaps his intention is rather o point his moral against the Queen, of whose evity, he hints, the poet was made the victim. He epresents Murray as falling on his knees before Mary, and the scene proceeds in this fashion: ' 'Madam, I beseech your grace, cause me not to ake the blood of this man upon me; your grace as entreated him so familiarly before, that ye have offended all your nobility; and now if he shall be ecretly slain at your own commandment, what hall the world judge of it? I shall bring him o the presence of justice, and let him suffer by aw according to his deserving.' 'O,' said the Queen, 'ye will never let him speak?' 'I shall do,' said he, 'madam, what in me lieth to save your honour.' "

Chastelard's shrift was short. This is Knox's account of the end: "Poor Chatelet was brought

back from Kinghorn to St. Andrews, examined, put to an assize, and so beheaded the 22nd of February, 1562. He begged license to write to France the cause of his death, 'which,' said he, in his tongue, was '*Pour être trouve en lieu trop suspect*'; that is, 'Because I was found in a place too much suspected.' At the place of execution, when he saw that there was no remedy but death, he made a godly confession, and granted, that his declining from the truth of God, and following of vanity and impiety, was justly recompensed upon him. But in the end he concluded, looking unto the heavens, with these words, 'O cruelle dame!' that is, 'cruel mistress.' What that complaint imported, lovers may divine. And so," concludes Knox with a Puritanical snuffle of satisfaction, and a final fling at the Queen, "received Chatelet the reward of his dancing; for he lacked his head, that his tongue should not utter the secrets of our Queen. 'Deliver us, O Lord, from the rage of such inordinate rulers.'"

Strange indeed as it seems to our modern notions, Mary was present at Chastelard's execution—the second lover she had seen die within six months for her sake. "Most lovely, but most cruel of her sex," had been Lord John Gordon's last cry to her, only a short while before, and now Chastelard takes farewell of her from the same scaffold in almost identical words: "Adieu to thee so beautiful and so cruel—who kills me, and yet whom I shall never

case to love." So runs one version, slightly elaborating on Knox, as also on Brantôme, who was also present at the execution, and supplements, or rather corrects, Knox's account of Chastelard's good end with a picturesque and appropriate variant. According to him it was not the consolations of religion that Chastelard found at the end, but the consolation of poetry, with a volume of Ronsard for his breviary. "Executed," says Brantôme, "for his presumption—the presumption of Phaëton—and not for any crime he stood on the scaffold with the hymns of Ronsard in his hand, and for his eternal consolation he read through the 'Hymn of Death,' which is very well made, and very suitable to bring peace to the dying, seeking the support of no other spiritual book, nor any minister or confessor. Coming to an end of his reading, he turned towards the place where he believed the Queen to be, and cried aloud, 'Adieu, most beautiful and most cruel princess in the world!' And then, very calmly offering his neck to the executioner, he allowed himself to be despatched with the utmost ease."

Years after, when Mary herself had come to the block at Fotheringay, there were those who had recalled Chastelard's last words, and Mary's cruelty in thus allowing him to die. Brantôme, however, would justify the Queen against such censure. "Some," he says, "have wished to discover why he had called her so cruel—was it because she had had

no pity on his love, or no pity on his life? But how was it possible to have shown that last? If, after her first pardon, she had pardoned him still a second time, she would have been entirely compromised; and so to save her honour, it was necessary that the law should take its course." There, one cannot but feel, speaks the man of sense, as well as the man of the world. Chastelard, as Brantôme had said, had played at Phaëton, and must take the consequences, as it must be admitted he did with courage and dignity and with a proper sense of that dramatic effect the occasion demanded.

There were those who hinted, and indeed said what one cannot believe, nay! will not even think of believing, that there was political method in Chastelard's madness, and that his tragic escapade was a deliberate affront put upon the Queen by her Huguenot enemies in France, with a view to fouling her good name with Philip of Spain, whose son was looked upon at that time as her possible husband. It is possible, indeed, that such enemies may, without his suspicion of their motives, have inflamed Chastelard's passion and worked on his vanity for such hidden ends, but, tragic fool as Chastelard undoubtedly was, the whole picture we get of him forbids any such mean shadow upon his splendid folly. A glorious and graceful fool, maybe, but surely no worse than that; and one cannot but feel that the man who loved Mary so wildly that he was willing to give his life for a kiss compares well

ter all, with a coarse, rough-riding Bothwell whose
-called love was not for Mary, but her throne.
anding there on his scaffold, with that volume of
onsard in his hand, and his eyes with their last long
ok seeking his Queen, surely he cuts no such sorry
gure, after all, and deserves his "place in the
ory."

XIV

LEGENDARY LADIES OF THE POETS

IN addition to the well-authenticated "muses of certain poets, women of known name an history who have been loved and sung int that literary legend we grandiosely speak of " immortality," the world of poetry is haunted b less defined shapes of womanhood, women who liv for us only in the verse which they have ostensib inspired, often mere decorative names at the hea of a poem, flowery nominations, pretty labels, it were, on the conserves of past emotions. Such a Petrarch's Laura, Herrick's Julia, Waller's Sacha issa; and, more shadowy still, the fragrant siste hood of Lesbias, Chloes, and Corinnas, from th days of Catullus, Horace, and Ovid to the comi of Wordsworth's Lucy and Tennyson's Mariana.

The question "Who is Sylvia?" may be ask equally in vain of many another name lyrically illu trious, and it is to be feared that such pretty nam too often stand for no one faithfully loved girl, b for many girls loved faithlessly and thus collectiv honoured—or, to put it more magnificently, " n woman, but the angel that is the type of

men." As a matter of fact, all love-poems, wever sincerely addressed to one woman, who y indeed be the immediate provocation of m, are actually inspired by and written to all men. The poet is by nature a born lover of men, and however faithfully he may deem nself to be celebrating the one woman of the ment, or even of a life-time, it is his general timent for the sex at large that really floods his em with vitality and gives it universality. Usually, , the one great love of a poet's life is the culmina- n of other lesser loves, which are absorbed in it, by a process of transmigration. The dead passion Chloe lives again in the live passion for Corinna, d even the casual tenderness learnt from a for- tten Amaryllis may contribute to the perfection that deeper emotion reserved for the heart's atrice and Laura. "How many suns it takes to ke one speedwell blue!"

Besides, women in general must also share with a ll more universal muse the credit of a poet's piration, no less a muse than Nature herself, ich is a poet's first and last passion, and of whom man is but one, though the chief, accident. the inspiration of all great love-poems woman st consent to divide honours with the universe; th the starry night, with the sea's mystery, or the ging of some April bird. She is so much to the et because she stands for so much more, mysteri- sly gathering up in her strange being the diffused

thrill and marvel of existence. Probably, if a po told the truth, he would admit that the moon the sea is more to him than any woman, howev wonderful; but a woman is as near as he can g to those mysteries:

> "Sometimes thou seemest not as thyself alone
> But as the meaning of all things that are."

It is in that mood that a poet loves his beloved best- when, that is, she transcends herself, and becom the sacramental vessel of the universe. One mig compare a woman's eyes to those magic crysta employed by seers for the purposes of divination.

The poet's rapt gaze is not at them, but throu them into that spiritual azure of which they are t fairy windows. For this reason, perhaps then, poet's ranging fancy, from one fair face to anoth should not be imputed to him for a vulgar inco stancy, but rather for a divine instructive constan to the spirit of beauty in all things, which he was bo to seek, to worship, and to celebrate.

It is this universal quality of a poet's love that its turn gives to its accidental objects their univer significance and appeal, thus charging the belove name with more than a merely personal histori meaning, and making it symbolize for all m certain types of beauty and certain ways of livi Even where the poet's mistress is historically dividualized, as in the case of Beatrice Portinari, s ceases to be one individual woman and becomes t

ıbol for all time of love in its loftiest spiritual ltation, as that Clodia the pleasure-loving wife Quintus Metellus Aler, who wept so bitterly he death of her sparrow, and likewise poisoned husband, becomes for all time, as the Lesbia of ullus, the symbol of love whose joys are mainly the senses. "The poet's Lesbia, the poet's trice, ours is the choice," it comes naturally to redith to write; for these two names have ome fixed formulæ of expression, a part of the ture-language of mankind.

similarly, Petrarch's Laura is not remembered herself, for any of those gifts and graces Petrarch industriously sang, but, as the symbol of the long faithfulness and high-flown adoration of lover, Laura may, I think, be said to have vived Petrarch, and his fame to have died in ing her immortality; so it seems to some of us vadays, striving in vain to appreciate at its ancient uation the monument of sugar so patiently d up and elaborately fretted through so many rs in her honour. The interest that survives for n Laura and Petrarch to-day is not in the poetry, even in the lovers themselves, but in the spiritual social conditions of a time which could make h a kind of fame possible, could elevate a private e-affair into a matter of public European portance. Consider this incident and its signifi-ce. When Charles of Luxemburg paid a visit Avignon—Laura's city—being entertained at a

great festival in his honour, at which all the lo
nobility attended, he desired that, among t
ladies present, Laura should be pointed out to hi
This being done, he motioned the other ladies asi
and, approaching Laura, he gazed with revere
interest into her face for a moment, and th
respectfully kissed her on the forehead and on t
eyelids. Thus even in her own life-time had La
become a canonized figure; and, nearly t
hundred years after, when her tomb was discove
and opened, no less a King than Francis I. was th
to do her honour. How impossible to imagine a
such ceremonies in our time, or to parallel in a
form so public a participation in any lofty spirit
sentiment whatsoever. Through Laura alone
realize how real and influential a fact was t
troubadour convention of which Petrarch's poe
was the supreme culmination, and what a genu
force it must have been in the spiritual developm
of the time. The love of Petrarch for Laura
not indeed regarded as a merely private affair,
as a crowning conspicuous example of what
might call the public worship of Womanhood,
then elevated by the troubadours into a sort
poetic religion. The fact of Laura being the
of another man, Hugh de Sade, a noble of her
rank, was, of course, but in keeping with the cur
troubadour convention, which, in the choice
married woman for its muse, implied the
platonism of its adoration; for it is not neces

say that the essence of troubadour passion was hopelessness of the customary amorous rewards. Love of an object too high for its attainment, l therefore a love of pure spirit, though repressed the language of passion, was its ideal. That is the son why troubadour poetry for the most part, rarch's included, is such dreary reading. It is so dently mere literary ingenuity displaying itself a vacuum of feeling, the bloodless euphuism rn of the feigned worship of an abstraction. us Laura, for all Petrarch's protestation, became s a woman than a theme, much as in our time the ath of Arthur Hallam grew to be less a grief to nnyson than a starting-point for meditation on ath and immortality. Yet Petrarch was very sitive that none should doubt either the reality his mistress or his passion. There is extant a ter of his to his friend the Bishop of Lombez, o, it would appear, had manifested a modern pticism on the subject of his grand passion. Would to God," writes Petrarch, "that my ura were indeed but an imaginary person, and passion for her but sport! Alas! it is rather a dness! hard would it have been, and painful, to gn so long a time—and what extravagance to y such a force in the world! No! we may unterfeit the action and voice of a sick man, but t the paleness and wasted looks of the sufferer; d how often have you witnessed both in me."

Petrarch has recorded his first meeting with Laura

in a famous inscription in his copy of Virgil pr
served at Milan. After the manner of Dante in t
"Vita Nuova," he writes: "Laura, illustrious
her own virtues, and long celebrated by my vers
I beheld for the first time, in my early youth,
the 6th of April, 1327, about the first hour of t
day, in the church of Saint Claire in Avigno
and in the same city, in the same month of Ap
the same day and hour, in the year 1348, this lig
of my life was withdrawn from the world while
was in Verona, ignorant, alas! of what had befall
me."

Petrarch had, therefore, been writing sonnets
Laura for twenty-one years, as he was to contin
doing at intervals for another twenty-six. Sure
a monstrous constancy. Schlegel has said th
Laura herself might well have been *ennuyée* had s
been compelled to read the whole of Petrarc
sonnets to her at a sitting; and Byron has his o
cynical explanation of the matter:

> "Think you, if Laura had been Petrarch's wife
> He would have written sonnets all his life?"

Though it seems to be a general truth that t
voice of the nightingale is hushed by marriage—
sings George Meredith:

> ". . . the nightingale scarce ever charms the long twilight
> Mute with the cares of the nest."

yet some married men have written exceedin
long and dull poems on their wives, as some wi

ve inspired some excellent poetry too. The e famous Castara of William Habington is an mple of the Muse Matrimonial. Habington was pious man of the metaphysical school of poets at enjoyed a certain vogue during the first half the seventeenth century, and he prides himself the propriety of his inspiration. "If," he says nically in a preface, "the innocency of a chaste use should be more acceptable and weigh heavier the balance of esteem, than a fame begot in ultery of study, I doubt I shall leave no hope of mpetition"; and again he says, "when love ilds upon the rock of chastity, it may safely ntemn the battery of the waves and threatenings the wind, since time, that makes a mockery of the mest structures, shall itself be ruinated before that demolished." Would that the poet were as od as the husband, yet Castara—in life Lucia, ughter of the first Lord Powis—has contrived to ve in literary history through verses such as these :

"Like the violet which, alone,
Prospers in some happy shade,
My Castara lives unknown,
To no looser eye betray'd,
For she's to herself untrue,
Who delights i' th' public view. . . .

"She her throne makes reason climb,
While wild passions captive lie :
And each article of time,
Her pure thoughts to heaven fly :
All her vows religious be,
And her love she vows to me."

Another very different champion of the mu matrimonial is John Donne. Through all t crusts of metaphysical conceits there breaks Donne's poetry the flame of white interior fir set alight by one of the bravest and most attracti wives in the history of love. Anne More was t daughter of Sir George More, Lord Lieutenant the Tower, a father whose sternness made a ru away marriage necessary, and whose implacabili hampered the devoted couple for years. Y through all, their love wore a gallant feather romance, romance productive of no less than twel children, as well as Donne's finest poems, and livi still in one or two anecdotes of a peculiarly viv humanity. Such is the story of Donne during absence from England seeing his wife in a visio She was in childbed at the time, but did not d "I have seen," he told a friend who was with hi "my dead wife pass twice by me through this roo with her hair hanging about her shoulders, and dead child in her arms." We get a glimpse of h spirit in her wish, on the occasion of one of Donn enforced business visits abroad, to accompany h husband dressed as a page. One has a childish wi that he had given in to her whim, and taken her wi him. He wrote her a charming lyric instead:

"Sweetest love, I do not go,
For weariness of thee,
Nor in hope the world can show
A fitter love for me;

But since that I
At the last must part, 'tis best,
Thus to use myself in jest
By feignéd deaths to die."

For another absence he has this gayer solace :

"By absence this good means I gain,
That I can catch her
Where none can watch her,
In some close corner of my brain.
There I embrace and kiss her ;
And so I both enjoy and miss her."

But the brave story, like all brave stories, had to
d ; and she was to leave Donne alone, with a new-
rn child, their twelfth, when he was but forty-
o. Her death was to make him a great divine,
her love had made him a great poet. Who does
t know those solemn lines written against his
rial :

"Whoever comes to shroud me, do not harm
Nor question much
That subtle wreath of hair about mine arm ;
The mystery, the sign, you must not touch,
For 'tis my outward soul
Viceroy to that, which unto Heav'n being gone,
Will leave this to control,
And keep these limbs, these provinces from dissolution."

As some of these half legendary women live as the
nbols of the great ways of loving, love's passion,
e's idealism, love's faithfulness, so others stand
the more tender, playful aspects of love, or
vive by some trait of manner, some one charm,
even some trick of dress. So Lesbia, as we have
d, lives by her little sparrow, which still chirps

so prettily and pathetically—*ad solam domina usque pipilabat*—in royal Latin till this day :

"O it was sweet to hear him twitter—twitter
In the dear bosom where he made his nest!
Lesbia, sweetheart, who shall say how bitter
This grief to us—so small to all the rest? . . .

"And in no other bosom would he sing,
But sometimes sitting here and sometimes there,
On one bough and another, would he sing—
Faithful to Lesbia—as I am to her. . . .

"Foul shades of Orcus, evil you befall!
'Tis true you smote her little sparrow dead—
But this you did to Lesbia worse than all:
You made her eyes with weeping—O so red!"

Ben Jonson's Celia, who seems to have been no o in particular, lives for us only with her eyes, Sir John Suckling's "dearest princess, Aglaura by her delicious feet, those feet that—

"Beneath her petticoat,
Like little mice, stole in and out,
As if they fear'd the light."

and Waller's Sacharissa by her famous girdle :

"A narrow compass! and yet there
Dwelt all that's good, and all that's fair.
Give me but what this ribbon bound,
Take all the rest the sun goes round."

Waller's great fame as a poet is hard to reali nowadays, and even the name of "Sacharissa seems to survive with a sort of silent derision

ing an extreme example, almost a parody, of
e affected names under which it was once the
hion for poets to celebrate their mistresses.
obably the "Sophonisba" of James Thomson—

"O Sophonisba! Sophonisba O!"—

ached the limit of affectation. Lady Dorothea
dney, eldest daughter of the Earl of Leicester,
ose hand Waller in vain sought, in his frigid
urtly fashion, was a personality deserving a more
arm-blooded immortality. But true passion was
lacking to Waller's nature as it is to his poetry.
e was, by the way, the first poet to abstain from
toxicating drink. He was almost as well known as a
water-drinker" as a wit; and of his "wit" one
gallant example does not show him in a very
vourable light either as a lover or even a gentle-
an. It is said that, when both he and Sacharissa,
en the widowed Lady Sunderland, had grown
mewhat elderly, she had met him at some recep-
on, and, smilingly reminding him of their young
ys, had asked him, "When will you write such
e verses on me again?" "When you are as
ung, madam, and as handsome as you were then,"
s the brutal answer of her one-time lover. Very
idently she had done well in bestowing her hand
ewhere, and it is presumed that Waller was then
o old to be called out for his insolence. It is
her the reverse of an honour that "Sacharissa"

should live by association with such a coxcomb
It is pleasanter to think of her as the sister o
Algernon Sydney.

As Sacharissa by her girdle, so Herrick's Jul
lives by her "tempestuous petticoat," that mo
bewitching and gallant of all immortal garment
Julia's mortal identity is even more complete
hidden in her anonymous immortality than h
buxom comeliness was hidden in "the winnin
wave" of her famous petticoat, and there is n
reason to wish her more definitely individualize
Herrick was not the man to have a great love-affai
Woman was to him a seductive impersonality,
being of bloom and bright eyes, red lips, pearly teet
and rounded contours, good to go a-Maying with
just a woman, but *not* "a spirit too." He confesse
that he never wished for marriage, and, though
wrote some fine religious poetry, he was, as a ru
very well contented with the charming surface
the flower-like forms and perfumes of thing
and he loved women as he loved his daffodils, with
pagan simplicity and satisfaction in their beauty a
freshness, an enjoyment untainted with cynicis
and, though touched with pathos, never troubl
with those Wordsworthian thoughts too deep f
tears. It is a healthy, sweet-smelling, May-morni
world, a veritable Hesperides, of golden app
and "golden lads and lasses," in which he invi
us to go a-Maying—whether it be with Julia

inna is all one to the easy-going, light-hearted

"Rise, and put on your foliage, and be seen
To come forth, like the spring-time, fresh and green,
And sweet as Flora. Take no care
For jewels for your gown or hair;
Fear not, the leaves will strew
Gems in abundance upon you. . . ."

He might well have preached worse sermons, n't you think, to his Devonshire parishioners. As one turns over the leaves of any collection of love-songs, many another flower-like name leads against oblivion," surely not in vain; for in thing is the preservative magic of words more ikingly illustrated than the manner in which, little more than the musical mention of a name, ey contrive to make it live for us with a creative ggestiveness. All that is needed is a name—not cessarily a beautiful one—and a lyrical word or o, a brief rhythm sincerely accented with feeling, ough stalk, so to speak, to carry the flower, and have evoked for us as by enchantment an un- ing face of legend.

Such is old Skelton's "Merry Margaret":

". . . merry Margaret
As midsummer flower,
Gentle as falcon,
Or hawk on the tower."

Such, too, is Campion's Amaryllis:

"I care not for these ladies,
That must be wooed and prayed:
Give me kind Amarillis,
The wanton country maid."

Such sometimes even is the power of the mere title of a poem, as Lovelace's "To Lucasta on Going to the Wars," or Cleveland's "On Phyllis—Walking before Sunrise."

Such, to come to later times, is Lamb's magic with "When maidens such as Hester die"; or Landor's immortalizing sigh over Rose Aylmer. Alfred de Musset and Rossetti—with those names that are "five sweet symphonies"—employ this gift with charming results.

All that seems to be necessary is for the poet to love the name enough, and to speak it, or sing it, or sigh it, as though he loved it, to carve it like Rosalind on some tree in the forest, and the miracle is done. Next to nothing need be said, except her name called out on that wind of Time that blows so many beautiful names about the world. Not idly, therefore, have the poets claimed to set the names of their beloved among the stars. Their lightest song has proved their power to keep their word, and only those women are forgotten who have been as unfortunate as she of whom it was said:

"She had no poet—and she died."

XV

ST-ELLE BRUNE? EST-ELLE BLONDE?"

(An Excursus on an Ancient Controversy)

FROM time to time there is revived a very ancient controversy, old as that of light and darkness.

Certain prophets of evil toll the passing bell of nd beauty and foresee its ultimate eclipse a night of raven locks and coal-black eyes. This s predicted some fourteen years ago by Henry Finck in his treatise on "Romantic Love and rsonal Beauty," wherein he saw, so to speak, finish of the last blonde in a dime museum. th Mr. Finck it is the Spanish beauty first, l the rest nowhere. His passion for "the ladies Cadiz" equals Lord Byron's, and he writes as nspired by a love-potion brewed by one of those dalusian brunettes who, to his mind, prefigure he perfected woman of the millennium."

'Who round the North for paler dames would k?" he quotes contemptuously; and that his is hasty conclusion five hundred odd closely nted pages of erudition on his pleasant and witty ject bear witness.

The brunettes may rejoice in so well-equippe a champion; but, doughty as Mr. Finck is, th blondes—need one say it?—are no less well de fended. As a matter of fact, they seem to hav had it pretty much their own way in literatur from the time of Eve, of whose blondness Milto seems to have had no doubt. He says that she—

> "As a veil, down to the slender waist
> Her unadorned golden tresses wore
> Dishevell'd, but in wanton ringlets waved,
> As the vine curls her tendrils."

Adam's legendary first wife, Lilith, "the witc he loved before the gift of Eve," seems to have bee of the same complexion, if we may trust Rosset who seems to have known more about her tha any other poet, and who tells us that "her enchante hair was the first gold." The same poet, in anoth place, sings of—

> "Youth, with still some single golden hair
> Unto his shoulder clinging."

Yes, that famous authority, Youth, is most "solid" for blondes—the youth of the wor and the youth of the individual alike. One mig venture, I think, on the dictum that a man's fi love is always blond, but his last love brunet Dante speaks of the blond tresses of Beatrice, a is not Venus herself always *Venus aurea*, "t golden Aphrodite"? Ceres, the bounteous eart mother, might almost be called the mother

ides, whereas brunettes might unkindly be to trace their descent from her daughter, erpine, the unhappy queen of Pluto's realm. Mr. Finck might say; but surely not I. I have the temerity to take sides in so dangerous an unter. Safer to be on both sides at once, like witty Frenchman who sang:

> "Est-elle brune? Est-elle blonde?
> Rien ne l'égale dans ce monde;
> Rien n'égale aussi mon amour;
> Et, sans être inconstant, j'ai la bonne fortune
> D'être amant en un même jour
> Et d'une belle blonde, et d'une belle brune."

have just come upon the above stanza in a ghtful treatise which I have unearthed in a ltory ramble round my shelves, dipping into volume and that in search of light on this great ect; one of those delicately ordered dis- itions made only in France on the blond beauties he Venetian school of painting—"*Les Femmes des, selon les Peintres de l'Ecole de Venise.*" he anonymous writers—"*deux Vénitiens*," they themselves—have made the masterpieces of etian painting the appropriate peg on which to g various charming learning in celebration of d beauty, and they supplement their essay with agrant garland of poetry in praise of blond anhood, from Hesiod to Sainte-Beuve—"*La rlande Poétique des Femmes Blondes.*" They add arming bundle of quaint "*recettes*," collected

from old Italian sources, recipes for the making what we should nowadays call "peroxide blonde —a process which sounds ever so much prett and more respectable as they used to say it in Lat *ad faciendum capillos aureos.*

We shall help ourselves to the learning of our t Venetians from time to time as we go on; but not the very existence of such a treatise, to start wi curiously significant of the seriousness with wh this old warfare of blonde *versus* brunette has be waged? Certainly it is a well-foughten field, a trivial as at first sight the dispute may see there can be no question that it has the mysteri depth and bitterness of a natural enmity. Fr time immemorial blondes and brunettes h cordially despised and hated each other; a lovers of beauty, according to unexplained natu affinities, have taken sides, Guelf and Ghibelli in this old-world struggle.

Colour, anyhow, is a mystery. Scientists do pretend—or only pretend—to explain it. That has some profound meaning hidden away in depth of things, and that differences of col stand for spiritual differences correspondin marked or subtle, no sensitive person doub There are, as we know, highly gifted beings w profess to see the colours of the soul. Inde there is a whole mystic literature on the subj worthy the attention of the curious.

From the beginning mankind seems to have

arked preference for blond things, a sense of rity in their presence, a feeling that their ndness stood for a central beneficence and ocence in their nature; whereas darkness has n similarly suspect as standing for hidden possibly evil qualities and powers. It is not, I k, too fantastic to see in this man's primitive of the dark, and to trace the universal prefer- for blond wigs in artificial periods to his nitive worship of the sun.

The deities to which, in the terrifying mystery is childhood, he has turned for protection have ally been blond, as have most of those gracious sonifications which embodied his notions of een beneficent influences. Apollo in the South Balder in the North were both golden-haired s; so was Dionysus, "the spirit of fire and dew, e and leaping in a thousand vines." Angels saviours of the world have usually been imagined lond. Man's most appealing symbol of divine . the Madonna, from Raphael to Rossetti, es to us in a halo of her own golden hair. ena is always "the grey-eyed"; Aurora, a, Pomona, and the Graces are all blondes.

The brunettes, however, may claim Juno, the t royal lady of Olympus, for their own, as also, s not without significance to note, the nine ses. The mysterious Hecate, too, is theirs, and inister, beautiful deities of magic arts and tragic ms. The Furies were brunettes, and likewise

the Fates ; but, on the other hand, the Norns we grey-eyed, and the Valkyries, " the choosers of t slain," were redoubtable blondes, with their strean ing, blood-stained locks of Northern gold. It impossible to imagine Cupid with black hair a olive skin, and his beloved Psyche was doubtl as blond as a ray of sunshine playing amid h tendrilled curls.

Then again, so many natural things useful and dear to man are blond, such as honey and co and oil, springing grass and running water and t sheltering foliage of trees, with their golden frui The flowers man loves best are blue or white ; a of the birds, is not the soul a white bird, and t bluebird man's symbol of happiness ? Dark-hu flowers bring with them a certain fear, such as t deadly nightshade—the belladonna of brune beauty—or they suggest sorrow. Black pluma always marks the bird of ill omen ; though we m parenthesize in passing that it is persons of d complexion who are in demand to bring good l on such occasions as New Year's Eve.

Money, it is perhaps not impertinent to obser is a blond commodity ; though Sparta, I belie had an iron coinage—but when did money ever l black ? And, not inappropriately, the old scho history legend of Gregory the Great and English captives comes to one's mind, and his pi pun represents the immemorial attitude of human toward blondes. They look so like angels !

How far history bears out this instinctive senti-
nt we shall have occasion to inquire, but we
remark in passing that one of the most illustri-
of beautiful blondes was Lucrezia Borgia. There
xtant a dazzling description of her as she drew all
on one of her glittering progresses through
y; and record is made of her stopping at
ola that she might wash her hair, that golden
which she wore sometimes in a coif of golden
sown with jewels and tied with a black ribbon,
le at other times she rode on horseback with it
aming loose across her glorious shoulders.

A propos this, our two Venetians above-mentioned
us that in the sixteenth century the roofs of
ses in Venice were crowned with little wooden
ctions, shaped Belvidere fashion, where the
netian ladies used to sit the day long with their
utiful tresses spread out in the sun. They
re than hint, however, that the glitter of these
ses might be described, in Swinburne's phrase,
"not golden, but gilded"; and this, indeed,
be a fitting place to quote one of those quaint
netian recipes for the guidance of the feminine
hemist:

"Take an ounce and a half of lupins, one of
rrh, half an ounce of larkspur, half an ounce
dry lees of white wine; steep the whole in
er which you have made to boil with red-hot
lers of the vine. Leave it to steep all night,
, the following morning, bathe your hair in it.

You will thus obtain tresses so blond that golde thread will be put to shame. The virtue of lupin for this object, is marvellous, and there comes t mind another means no less perfect.

"When, in the spring, the buds of the popl first appear, and they begin to put forth those ligh shoots which will later become leaves, gather som of them, say about two ounces, and place them i eight or a dozen ounces of oil; heat them ove the fire until they thicken; then expose in a phi in the sun. When used, in a very short tim from the effect of this oil, your hair will becom very blond and very beautiful."

Were there space, I might also copy for the fair- or dark—reader particulars of the manner of makin the face as "white as the albatross," or tell "how certain balm makes the complexion whiter tha snow." These delightful recipes, something like hundred in number, sufficiently explain the di appointment of a certain gallant Abbé de Berni who, about the time of the Revolution, made pilgrimage to Venice in quest of the glorio blondes he had worshipped in Titian, Tintorett and Paul Veronese; not the red and white blond of the North, as found in Germany, in Scandinavi and, above all, in England, "that Eldorado blondes, where the word 'fair' is a synonym f beautiful," but blondes, as Maurice Hewlett h since described them, "splendidly coloured as sunburnt nectarine, crowned with a mass of re

d hair." Alas for the traveller's dreams, the men he saw in the streets were beautiful indeed, t black as crows!

Was some caprice of nature subsequent to the of the great painters responsible for this disointment? Surely not, exclaim our two inious Venetians. The answer is in the writings those old beauty doctors, and the disquieting nclusion forced upon one is that beauty so victorisly golden has seldom been the unassisted creation nature in any time or country, and that the preponderance of blond beauty in all ages has been ther one of the illusions of art than one of the ernal verities of ethnology.

Théophile Gautier, it may be recalled, had similar disillusionizing experience to that of the bbé de Bernis. He gives the history of it in a ort story called "The Fleece of Gold," in which u may read how a young French artist, surfeited th the brunette beauty of his own and other unette lands, determined to go to Antwerp in est of the blondes beloved by Rubens.

'It is decided," he said to himself. "I will love Fleming!"

So he takes the diligence to Brussels, and, as on as possible after his arrival, he posts himself a spot suitable for observation, and scrutinizes the promenading fair. But, alas, "he met an incalcule number of negresses, mulattresses, quadroons, f-breeds, griffs, yellow women, copper-coloured

women, green women, women of the colour of a boot-flap—but not a single blonde." In disgust, he determines to try Antwerp, but at first the like ill-success follows him, darting from street to street "seeking the blonde with an ardour worthy of the knights errant of old." At last—but how he came at last to discover his Gretchen the reader must find out for himself by reading the story. Suffice it that it ends with this dialogue:

"'Well!' said Gretchen, when he had finished his great picture of Aphrodite rising from the sea 'are you satisfied with your model?'

"'When would you like to publish our banns?' was the painter's significant reply."

If, then, such sleuth-hounds of feminine loveliness as the Abbé de Bernis and Théophile Gautier found the *aurea puella* so shy a quarry in the land of Rubens and of Paul Veronese alike, are we not, as I have said, forced to the conclusion that nature is by no means so blond in her preference and productiveness as art has led us to suppose, and that her laws of "natural selection" and "survival of the fittest" are rather on the side of the brunette? Mr. Finck has no doubt whatever as to this, and has ready to hand statistics on his side, as follows:

"Almost eleven million school-children were examined in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Belgium, and the results showed that Switzerland has only 11·10, Austria 19·79, and Germany 31·8 per cent of pure blondes. Thus the very country

ich since the days of ancient Rome has been verbially known as the home of yellow hair d blue eyes, has to-day only 32 pure blondes in hundred; while the average of pure brunettes already 14·05 per cent, and in some regions as gh as 25 per cent. The 53·15 per cent of the xed type are evidently being slowly transformed o pure brunettes, thanks to intermarriages with ighbours of the dark variety.

" In England, Dr. Beddoe has collected a number statistics which also bear out the theory that unettes are gaining on blondes. Among 726 omen examined, he found 369 brunettes and 357 ondes. Of the brunettes he found that 78·5 per nt were married, while of the blondes only 68 r cent were married. Thus it would seem that brunette has ten chances of getting married in gland to a blonde's nine. Hence Dr. Beddoe asons that the English are becoming darker cause the men persist in selecting the darker-ired women as wives."

Wigs, then, and peroxide would seem to be the planation of the apparent predominance of ondes on our carboniferous planet; but this fact, it be a fact, impresses one with another—the rious observation that, whatever their com-exion, the majority of women have either *wished* be blond, or that the prevailing taste of the orld has preferred them to be so, or to seem so. o call a woman "dark" would seem often to

have been considered by her as a term of reproach. Says Phœbe in "As You Like It":

> "I have more cause to hate him than to love him;
> For what had he to do to chide at me?
> He said mine eyes were black and my hair black,
> And, now I am remembered, scorned at me."

Even the beautiful Shulamite felt it necessary to explain that, though she was black, yet was she comely; and how tenderly a shepherd in one of the idyls of Theocritus consoles his love for being swarthy!

"They call thee a gipsy, gracious Bombyca, and lean and sunburnt. 'Tis only I that call thee honey-pale. Yea, and the violet is swart, and swart the lettered hyacinth, but yet these flowers are chosen the first in garlands."

All the same, if hairdressers had been forced to exist on the manufacture of black wigs, the fraternity would hardly have been as prosperous as it has ever been. Surely, in classical days, it would have gone barefoot; for the manufacture of blond wigs and the traffic in blond hair was one of the great commercial industries of antiquity. The ghostly Roman ladies on the Pompeian frescoes all wear the same shade of yellow, and emperors and poets alike set the fashion for blond hair, which the more luxurious were accustomed to powder with gold-dust. Nero's queen was blond; blond also was the Faustina of Marcus Aurelius—

> "With state of splendid hair that droops
> Each side, Faustine."

The locks that Horace loved best to see bound up with elegant simplicity—*simplex munditiis*—were yellow. Those were Pyrrha's, but the tresses of his Phyllis and Chloe were of the same fashionable tint. Catullus has celebrated "the yellow crown" of his Berenice, Propertius the like adornment of his Cynthia, and Tibullus also has sung to the same colour. Homer's Helen was golden—not, one likes to think in her case, gilded—and the blondness of Virgil's Dido would seem to hint that Æneas had a preference for brunettes.

In the days when the witty Apuleius, another philo-blonde, wrote his "Golden Ass," country maidens with blond hair had literally, as Christian Rossetti says, "much gold upon their heads," for great ladies were eager to buy it up at good prices. In much later days, at Neris, a certain village in France, there used to be an annual fair where the peasant girls came to barter their locks with enterprising pedlars; and who has not agonized with Victor Hugo's poor Fantine!

But need one say that the blondes did not have it quite all their own way with antiquity? If the brunettes were numerically outclassed, yet it may be held that in quality they more than made good. Cleopatra, it will be remembered, did not feel it necessary to wear a yellow wig, but, possibly in irony, loved to surround herself with blond slaves. Zenobia, too, seems to have been imperiously raven-locked and black-eyed; and Sappho

is no inconsiderable asset to the brunette side of the account. Swinburne sings of—

> "The small dark body's Lesbian loveliness
> That held the fire eternal."

If, as one of her editors suggests, one may accept an alternative reading of the phrase "violet-weaving," applied to her by Alcæus, and substitute "violet-tressed," she would seem to have been distinguished by that beautiful blue-black hair—black hair with blue reflections in it—attributed to the Muses.

Of other fair women of antiquity dowered with that "supreme beauty" which Lamartine has finely called "a royalty of the senses," the famous Phryne, who convinced a court of law by the loveliness of her form, seems to have been golden as honey. Calypso, too, and the Sirens were undoubtedly minted of human gold; and of ladies in the same siren class of later times, Nell Gywnn and Lady Hamilton must be counted as natural blondes. On the other hand, Diane de Poitiers, whose beauty recipes seem to have been chiefly cold baths and early rising, had "rich purple-black hair, which took a golden tint in the sunshine."

Of Greek women who added learning to beauty Aspasia goes to the brunettes, but Hypatia's eyes were blue and her hair yellow. Of later learned ladies who were beautiful as well, Vittoria Colonna

had "large, bright eyes and golden hair"; Beatrice d'Este was a sunbright beauty; and the eyes of the great-hearted Héloïse "reflected the azure tints of heaven."

Coming to later times, Mme. de Maintenon, the recording angel of Louis XIV, had "sparkling black eyes and a fine complexion." Mme. Récamier is catalogued as "complexion brilliant, little rosy mouth, pearly teeth, black curling hair, soft expressive eyes." Mme. de Sévigné, mark you, is portrayed for us by Mignard, and by Lamartine, in words no less glowing than the painting, with "rich locks of fair hair, dreamy blue eyes, fine folding eyelids of alabaster veined with azure, and a complexion in the fresh flower, which neither time nor sorrow ever faded." Lamartine adds other enthusiastic details, "making her image seem in our eyes to fill all space, and reach even to heaven," and suggesting a regret that other illustrious women, of whom we have but meagre and unrealizable details, had not been equally fortunate in their portrayers—Joan of Arc, for example, for whom we must content ourselves with generalizations and the spiritual vision of Bastien Lepage.

Returning for a moment to learned women—remembering, as we said above, that the Muses themselves are "violet-tressed"—we find them rather tiresomely indeterminate. Charlotte Brontë, for example, may be classed as intermediate, with "soft, thick brown hair, and peculiar eyes difficult

to describe." Sonya Kovalevsky, too, may be characterized, I hope without disrespect, as a Slavonic nondescript, though her countrywoman, Marie Bashkirtseff, in spite of her dark eyebrows, must rank as a militant blonde.

Jane Austen is common-sensibly definite, "a clear brunette, with a rich colour, hazel eyes, and curling brown hair," resembling, we are told, her own Emma Woodhouse. George Eliot is somewhat less definitely blond, "hair pale brown, worn in ringlets, complexion pale, eyes grey-blue." But there is, characteristically, no middle course with George Sand. Of the tragic muse of Chopin and Alfred de Musset, we read:

"Her large dark eyes sparkle with genius, her hair, black as ebony, falls on her shoulders in wavy ringlets."

A few queens may as well be here classified. Catherine de' Medici and Mary Queen of Scots are unmistakable "children of the dark star"; whereas Cassandra, Guinevere, Isabella of Spain, Elizabeth of England, Marie Antoinette, and Catherine of Russia are all so much capital for the blondes. It may be added of Elizabeth that it has been ungallantly declared that "she wore false hair, and that red." What would Spenser have said to such a libel on his peerless Gloriana? But possibly Spenser was like those twenty-one men of Cincinnati of whom Mr. Finck maliciously tells. These had all married red-haired women, but were found

on examination, to be colour-blind. They had, therefore, mistaken their wives for brunettes!

However, if to love red hair is to be colour-blind, no few poets and painters must have been colour-blind—particularly the painters of the Pre-Raphaelite school. Though many of Rossetti's most impressive faces look out of caves of hair black and mysterious as night—chiefly those he painted from the wonderful face of Mrs. William Morris, one of the world's regal brunettes—yet the inspiring face of his life, the muse of his poetry as well as of his painting, Elizabeth Siddal, first caught his fancy by the wealth of her coppery red hair and her strange blue-green eyes, like those of that queen Alaciel of whom Swinburne sings:

> "I am the queen Alaciel.
> My mouth was like that moist gold cell
> Whereout the thickest honey drips;
> Mine eyes were as a grey-green sea."

It is a marvellous blond head that lies in the last solemn sleep of Beatrice in "Dante's Dream."

The poets, as one would expect, are characteristically eclectic in the colour scheme of their loves. It is to be feared that they have frequently proved capable of equally impassioned adoration for blond and brunette beauty, like the French singer quoted above, in one and the same day. Even so grave a poet as Milton—who, in his youth, like Polonius, suffered much extremity from love—was moved alike by dark and fair, though one of his most decisive

utterances bears out my suggestion that a man's first love will usually be blond and his last brunette. In one of his Italian sonnets, translated by Cowper, he writes to a friend of a beautiful singer whom he had met during his visit to Italy—Leonora Baroni :

> "Yet think me not thus dazzled by the flow
> Of golden locks, or damask rose ; more rare
> The heartfelt beauties of my foreign fair !"

Yet Milton's two wives appear to have been blondes.

The famous Laura of Petrarch is described as "a fair, Madonna-like beauty, with soft, dark eyes, and a profusion of pale golden hair parted on her brow and falling in rich curls over her neck." Another famous Italian blonde was Byron's Countess Guiccioli, though Byron, we know, had a passion for black eyes. Spenser's own personal Elizabeth, whom he married, and whom he celebrates in his lovely "Epithalamion" and "Prothalamion," was blond, as was the Rosalind of his earlier affection :

> "That golden wire, thosé sparkling stars so bright
> Shall turn to dust, and lose their goodly light."

That Stella, thinking of whom Sidney wrote his lovely—

> "With how sad steps, O moon, thou climb'st the sky !
> How silently, and with how wan a face !—"

—is described with "dark, sparkling eyes ; pale brown hair ; a rich, vivid complexion."

Another Stella, she of Swift's strange love, was also brunette, "with silky black hair, brilliant eyes, and delicate features"; but in Vanessa Swift seems to have sought for contrast. Pope's Martha Blount was fair, with blue eyes.

Coming again to later days, that versatile lover Heine has thus put himself on record for the brunettes, *à propos* the women of Trent, in the Austrian Tyrol:

"I do love these pale, elegiac faces with the large black eyes that gaze at you so love-sick; I love also the dusk tint of those proud necks which Phœbus already has loved and browned with his kisses."

Alfred de Musset's Mimi Pinson, need one say, was blond:

"Mimi Pinson est une blonde,
Une blonde que l'on connaît."

But Musset was young and gay when he sang thus; his tragic muse, as we know, was to come later with George Sand.

Novelists seem, for the most part, to favour brunette heroines, as being more impressive—particularly, though not always, when their stories are tragic, thus following tradition and popular instinct. Take Hawthorne's Hester Prynne, with her "dark and abundant hair, so glossy that it threw off the sunshine with a gleam, and a face which, besides being beautiful from the regularity of feature and richness of complexion, had the

impressiveness belonging to a marked brow and deep black eyes."

Again, Thomas Hardy's Eustacia Vye is the very apotheosis of the brunette. "To see her hair," writes Mr. Hardy, "was to fancy that a whole winter did not contain darkness enough to form its shadow. It closed over her forehead like nightfall extinguishing the western glow." The Dark Lady of Shakespeare's idolatry can hardly have been more Stygian than that.

George Eliot has a fine picture of tragic Hetty Sorrel combing her "dark, hyacinthic" curls before her mirror. Fielding's Sophia was a most uncompromising brunette. "Her hair, which was black, was so luxuriant that it reached her middle," and "few could believe it to be her own"; while "her black eyes had a lustre in them which all her softness could not extinguish." Balzac's dangerous "Woman of Thirty" is pictured with "brown tresses and beautiful, almond-shaped dark eyes"; but perhaps the most dangerous woman in fiction, Becky Sharp, is described by Thackeray as "pale, sandy-haired, and with eyes habitually cast down. When they looked up, they were very large, odd, and attractive."

From this desultory survey of preferences, one way and the other, which could be almost indefinitely extended—what conclusion?

It seems to me that only a very hardened or biased generalizer could arrive at any; the historic honours

are so evenly distributed. Yet perhaps one does gain a certain impression that, while less showy in some respects than that of the blonde, the record of the brunette is one of more serious and stable values, and that perhaps there is something in the fancy of the old German mystic quoted by Walter Pater, who, speaking of the mystery of so-called "white things," says that the red rose came first, and that "white things" are "ever an afterthought — the doubles, or seconds, of real things, and themselves but half-real, half-material."

A greater force and depth, a more stable concreteness, seem to belong to brunette types of things. Dark colours, as we know, represent a greater absorption of the solar energy; what is coal but solidified sunshine? Do the black hair and the brown skin, according to Mr. Finck's idea, represent a greater amount of stored-up sunshine than the gold hair and the white skin, and, therefore, a larger endowment of vital force. Certainly, we involuntarily associate more dynamic qualities with brunette types; and the word "swart," as applied to men, has usually carried with it the sense of a sort of uncanny physical strength.

From the point of view of beauty, perhaps the ideal type would be that dreamed of by some artists in which blond hair will be combined with dark eyes, eyebrows, and eye-lashes, and skin like "the nut-brown maid." Nature, of course, does occasionally produce fascinating examples of that

type, and perhaps evolution is going in that direction. At all events, those of us who live long enough here in America should see some interesting developments in the course of the next two or three generations.

As with so many old conflicts, America seems to be the natural battle-ground for the final struggle, the Armageddon, in the world-old fight between blonde and brunette, being as it is the melting-pot of races. Every kind of colour is being dashed hourly on the gigantic palette. What will that mysterious artist, Nature, bring out of them all as he blends them in his slap-dash way with the cosmic brush ? If he is really on the side of the brunette, America will soon be in a position to tell us ; and perhaps time will prove Shakespeare, true prophet in so many things, once more on the winning side when, with his eyes on the mysterious Dark Lady of his sonnets, he wrote :

> "In the old time black was not counted fair,
> Or, if it were it, it bore not beauty's name ;
> But now is black beautv's successive heir."